

سكرا من الاعمال



THE INDEPENDENT

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What makes the Chinese so successful?

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You shall go to the ball (in a hired frock)

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IN THE WEDNESDAY REVIEW

Poor to gain in pension revolution

A REVOLUTION in pensions was unveiled by the Government yesterday as it promised extra cash for the poor and financial incentives to persuade middle-income groups to provide for their own retirement.

BY ANDREW GRUCE
Political Editor

From several Labour MPs who said it would deepen Britain's "morass of means-testing", they were disappointed that ministers backed away from a compulsory pension scheme encompassing the well-off and the poor. Instead, Mr Darling announced higher national insurance rebates in a £500m-a-year "subsidy" to encourage middle-income groups earning £3,000 to £18,500 to join new "stakeholder" schemes run

mainly by the private sector. Mr Darling feared a universal scheme, in which the rich subsidised the contributions of the low-paid, would be seen as a breach of New Labour's key pledge not to raise income tax. He said poor pensioners would be protected by a new guaranteed minimum pension from April and hoped that over the long term this would rise in line with earnings, rather than prices, so that it maintained its value. But the pledge failed to quell criticism by Labour MPs, who said the guarantee would

extend means-testing and be a disincentive to people joining the stakeholder schemes. Frank Field, who resigned as Minister for Welfare Reform in July after failing to win Tony Blair's backing for a compulsory-for-all scheme, led the criticism of the Green Paper. "It means that if you don't bother to save you will just pick up this [guaranteed minimum] pension at the end anyway. So the Jack the Lads who don't intend saving will benefit."

He said the Green Paper failed to treat the poor as "equal citizens", and was worried that future politicians would seek to unwind the proposed system. "I doubt whether the settlement will last. It is doubtful whether it is fair." Other Labour MPs said the minimum pension guarantee, which in effect builds income support into the basic state pension, would still leave old people with the "stigma" of having to claim it. Paul Flynn, MP for Newport West, said 1 million old folk already missed out because they did not want the "charity" of claiming income support, and would not

take up the new guarantee. "Why should we continue cheating them?" Mr Flynn asked. Steve Webb, pension spokesman for the Liberal Democrats, who back a compulsory system, said relying on incentives for middle-income earners would not solve the problem of future pensioner poverty.

Quentin Davies, Conservative spokesman on pensions, said anyone earning between £15,000 and £18,000 would be "completely barmy" to save under the Government's scheme, because they would be depriving themselves of thousands of pounds of means-tested benefits.

Help The Aged said the Green Paper was "weak and disappointing". Mervyn Kohler, the head of public affairs, said: "It does little to pull today's pensioners out of poverty. The paper does very little to encourage young people to make adequate savings for a pension."

But Mr Darling insisted his radical and affordable package would guarantee everyone a secure and decent income in retirement, and prevent millions more relying on means-tested benefits.

In a coded attack on the scheme drawn up by Mr Field, he said a "convention of rocket pension scientists" could produce all sorts of clever schemes. "What I am interested in is what works," he said.

Referring to Mr Field's brief from Mr Blair to "think the unthinkable," one Government source said: "He produced the unworkable."

Pensions to double, page 4

Chief of FA quits over £3.2m cash scandal

ENGLISH FOOTBALL was in disgrace last night after the resignation of its ruling body's chief executive, Graham Kelly, and a unanimous vote of no confidence in its chairman, Keith Wiseman, following an internal investigation into the alleged misuse of £3.2m of Football Association funds.

BY NICK HARRIS

for the world's greatest sporting event in 2006. As it is, although the affair will officially have no negative effects on England's chances, it will certainly do nothing to enhance the reputation of the English game in world football.

The FA investigation was centred on Mr Wiseman, who allegedly agreed to deliver grants totalling £3.2m over eight years to the Welsh FA in exchange for votes to support his bid to secure a place on the executive committee of Fifa, world football's governing body. It is understood that Mr Kelly's signature was on a letter concerning the payments to the Welsh FA, and it is thought his resignation was primarily through shame by association rather than involvement in any wrongdoing.

The news will not only tarnish the image of the English game but could also be damaging to England's bid to stage the 2006 World Cup. Had Mr Wiseman been elected to Fifa's executive committee, his position would have given him access to the people who will ultimately decide the venue

Mr Kelly's resignation was with immediate effect. Mr Wiseman, who declined to resign, will stay in his position until a special FA meeting next month when he is likely to be sacked. The FA's vice-chairman, Geoff Thompson, will take the helm at the FA for the immediate future while the FA's director of public affairs, David Davies, will take over as executive director in charge of the daily running of the FA.

At a hastily convened press conference last night, Mr Davies declined to go into specific detail about the affair but read out an official statement. "The executive committee has this afternoon accepted the resignation of Graham Kelly. They have thanked him for his 10 years of dedicated work and wished him well. They have also passed a unanimous vote of no confidence in the chairman, Keith Wiseman. He has declined to resign. The executive will seek endorsement for their action at a special FA council meeting in early January."



Graham Kelly, who resigned as the Football Association's chief executive in 'shame through association' after an inquiry into alleged misuse of funds Edward Sykes

dence in the chairman, Keith Wiseman. He has declined to resign. The executive will seek endorsement for their action at a special FA council meeting in early January. "This vote of no confidence was taken unanimously by an executive committee that represents all sections of the game."

It was taken with sadness, and only after considerable examination of all the circumstances. It was not taken lightly. Mr Davies added that yesterday's events will not interfere with the daily work of the FA. "At Lancaster Gate, at Wembley, and everywhere around the country, we have a

dedicated staff, all of them football supporters who care passionately about the game." He added that Glenn Hoddle's position as the England coach would not be affected by the changes at the FA and added that the English FA remained committed to staging the World Cup in 2006.

Commenting on the developments, the Sports Minister, Tony Banks, said in a statement: "It is a matter of great sadness to hear of events at the FA. However, it is for the internal workings of the FA to resolve the current situation."

Kelly's downfall, Sport, page 24

Libyans back plan for Lockerbie trial

THE TRIAL of the two Libyans accused of the 1988 Lockerbie bombing came a step closer yesterday when the Libyan parliament voted to accept a trial in Holland under Scottish law. However, the Libyans said that other unspecified obstacles may yet have to be overcome.

BY PAUL LASHMAR
AND DAVID USBORNE
in New York

The Foreign Office said the move seemed "mildly encouraging". A spokesman added: "At the moment it is only a Libyan media report. We have to be circumspect unless and until we have a formal response."

British officials said Libya now must make a formal response through the office of the United Nations Secretary-General, Kofi Annan.

Mr Annan said yesterday that he hoped the long deadlock over the two suspects, Abdel

Basset Ali al-Megrahi and Lamen Khalifa Fhimahmay, would soon be ended. "I think they [the Libyans] will move in the right direction," he said.

The UN chief conceded that several details were still missing from the resolution passed in Libya and that he would be seeking clarifications from the Libyan ambassador to the UN. Only then, Mr Annan said, would he report to the Security Council on whether the way was cleared for a trial.

While the Libyan resolution had endorsed the plan to hold the trial in a "neutral territory", there was no mention of the Netherlands. This was the



Annan: Seeks clarification

venue chosen by Britain and the United States. Nor did it address the matter of where the two men might serve their sentences. London and Washington insist it should be in Scotland. The bomb, set on board a Pan Am airliner, killed 270 people.

Pinochet lawyers tell of bias risk in ruling

IN AN unprecedented legal action, lawyers for General Augusto Pinochet yesterday asked the House of Lords to overturn the decision that the former Chilean dictator was not immune from prosecution.

They said that a senior law lord had allowed a "real danger of bias" into the earlier hearing because of his links with Amnesty International. Lord Hoffmann was also accused yesterday of having been "an active and hostile interrogator" of General Pinochet's counsel.

The lawyers asked a panel of five senior past and present law lords to rescind the earlier panel's decision of 25 November to overturn the High Court's ruling of immunity. It was Lord Hoffmann who cast the deciding vote which

BY KIM SENGUPTA

cleared the way for the Home Secretary, Jack Straw, last Wednesday to authorise that the 83-year-old face an extradition process launched by Spain on human rights charges.

Clare Montgomery QC, for General Pinochet, said that Lord Hoffmann's role in the decision and the "duration, variety and intensity" of his relationship with Amnesty "gave rise to the very least to the real danger of bias". She said Amnesty must be considered "one of the principal protagonists in the extradition proceedings".

The Independent revealed yesterday that the general's solicitors, Kingsley Napley, received a letter 10 months ago relating to an appeal for

Amnesty, which highlighted Lord Hoffmann's role. The firm had given £1,000 in response.

Ms Montgomery said there was "some evidence" that both she and Mr Nicholls should have known about the connection between Lord Hoffmann and Amnesty, when in fact they did not. She maintained that the onus of disclosure lay with Lord Hoffmann.

Alun Jones QC, representing the Crown Prosecution Service, argued that the general lawyers had known of the links before Mr Straw's decision.

The panel included Lord Browne-Wilkinson, who said they would not consider setting aside just the vote of Lord Hoffmann, thus confirming the High Court decision freeing General Pinochet. The hearing continues.

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FILM: ANTHONY QUINN REVIEWS 'PRINCE OF EGYPT' AND THE WEEK'S OTHER RELEASES
PLUS LAW

£2.5m drive to halt smoking

A HARD-HITTING anti-smoking campaign featuring a mother who has since died from her habit will be launched today to persuade younger people to give up smoking.

The £2.5m Health Education Authority advertising campaign features smokers in their thirties and forties who have contracted lung cancer and oral cancer and is aimed at showing young people aged between 16 and 24 the reality behind the image of smoking.

Michelle, a 44-year-old who began smoking when she was 13, died after being filmed for the campaign in November. The advert, in which she talks about her two children's hopes for her survival, is being screened with the permission of her family.

Other adverts show Anne, 43, removing her wig to reveal the effects of the treatment she is having for lung cancer and Peter, 39, who has developed cancer of the mouth as a result of smoking 20 cigarettes a day.

"These adverts make painful viewing," said Katie Aston, HEA anti-smoking campaign

BY GLENDA COOPER
Social Affairs Correspondent

manager. "They show ordinary people trying to come to terms with what smoking has done to them. They are young and all of them thought it would never happen to them."

The campaign will run from Boxing Day to No Smoking Day on 10 March.

The HEA has also created a series of advertisements to run in women's magazines such as *Elle* and *Cosmopolitan* to warn young women that smoking can damage their looks. The authority is concerned that nearly 30 per cent of women aged 16 to 24 are regular smokers.

The adverts will focus on how cigarette smoking ages, thins and discolours the skin.

"We need to give young women a message which is pertinent to them," said a spokesman for the HEA. "Young women can have difficulty making the connection between smoking and long-term illness but they can visualise what smoking does to their skin."



Camilla Rix, nine, recreating the atmosphere of a Victorian Christmas yesterday at the National Trust's Southwell workhouse, Nottinghamshire

David Jones

Judge denies LVF leader's pistol appeal

A MAN described in court as leader of the Loyalist Volunteer Force sought to secure his release yesterday on the grounds that a gun used in a recent shooting incident was covered by an official arms decommissioning certificate.

Mark Fulton was refused bail in the Northern Ireland High Court, the judge telling him that the ordinary law had to run its course.

Fulton is charged with possessing a firearm and ammunition with intent to endanger life in the early hours of Saturday, 5 December, in Portadown.

He was named in court as leader of the LVF, the group headed by Billy "King Rat" Wright until his murder by republicans a year ago.

BY DAVID MCKITTRICK
Ireland Correspondent

was based on the assertion that he possessed a certificate issued by the Northern Ireland decommissioning body, which is headed by the Canadian General John de Chastelain. Such certificates are meant to give immunity to representatives of paramilitary organisations who are transporting weapons for the purpose of decommissioning.

Opposing the application, crown counsel said witnesses had seen Mr Fulton produce a semi-automatic pistol and fire several shots in the air. He was then said to have put the gun to the head of a passer-by.

Mr Fulton's counsel claimed that two men had appeared, fired the gun, then handed it to him and disappeared.

It was said that when he saw a man crouching on the ground he had grabbed him by the shoulders and told him he was in no danger.

Lord Justice Campbell, refusing bail, said that Mr Fulton had been outside the limits of the document by carrying a loaded weapon.

An LVF statement, issued after the hearing, repeated its previous pledge that an act of decommissioning would take

place, adding that it was appointing a second person to liaise with the decommissioning body.

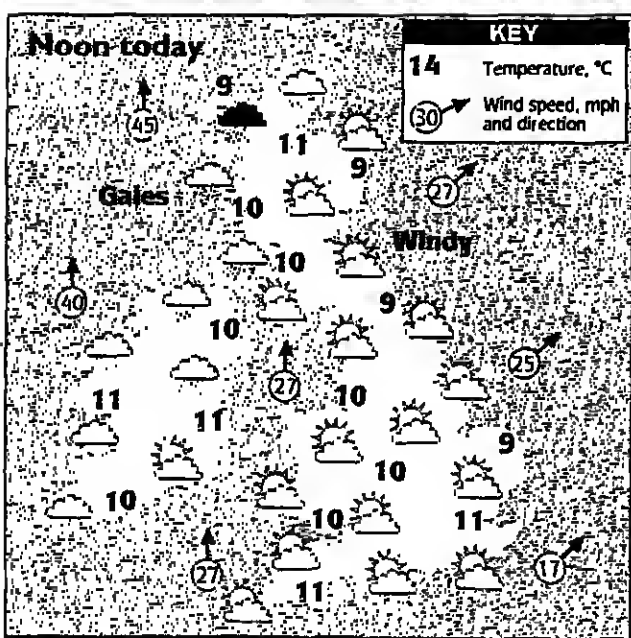
It has been reported that the decommissioning body issued a certificate to the LVF for the period 1 to 18 December, but this was rescinded shortly after the shooting incident.

Last month Mo Mowlam, Northern Ireland Secretary, announced that the Government was recognising the ceasefire called in May by the LVF.

The Portadown-based LVF is unique among paramilitary groups in promising early decommissioning of some weapons in exchange for the recognition of its ceasefire. Last month, however, it shelved plans for imminent decommissioning because it was offended by "insensitive" remarks by Unionist MP Ken Maginnis, who described LVF members as ruthless sectarian killers.

Optimism was growing in Belfast last night that agreement in the long-running dispute on the structures of government for Northern Ireland was close. The Ulster Unionists and the nationalist SDLP were confident they would have the impasse broken by Christmas - most likely this week. Talks between the two groups continued at Stormont.

BRITAIN TODAY



هكذا من الاعمال

Exhumed again: the macabre suicide riddle of God's Banker

EVEN IN death there is, for some, no rest. Sixteen years have passed since that damp June morning when Leonid Brezhnev still ruled the Soviet Union, Britain had just won the Falklands conflict and the body of Roberto Calvi was found hanging from the scaffolding beneath a bridge across the river Thames. Today, that same corpse – or at least the bones and husk, which are most likely all that remain – will be exhumed, yet again, from the cemetery at Drezzo in northern Italy where he was buried in November 1982. Yet another autopsy – the fourth in all – will be conducted. Those whose legacies are great unsolved criminal mysteries must forego the dignity of peace in death.

Calvi was "God's Banker", a financial accomplice of the Vatican, with which he set up a network of secret tiny companies, shielded behind a wall of banks stretching from Europe to Latin America. Alas, the empire was rotten to the core.

Calvi's Banco Ambrosiano had debts of almost \$1,300m, run up with the connivance of the IOR, the Vatican bank. He was a creature of the shadows who had sipped with the devil to cement his power. Clerics, the corrupt politicians of the old Italy, the sinister P-2 masonic lodge, leech-like middlemen and gangsters – all successfully dealt with Calvi, exploited him and betrayed him.

Then the incredible denouement – the flight to London under a false passport, the collapse of Ambrosiano, Italy's largest private-sector bank and, at the same time, the macabre end under Blackfriars Bridge, the body clad in a rumpled suit, pockets stuffed with banknotes and builders' stones. Was it suicide or murder? And if the latter, by whom? It was the biggest and most lurid bankruptcy in history.

And now, literally, it is being dug up again. The autopsy has been brought about by charges of conspiracy to murder Calvi levelled last year by magistrates in Rome against four men – his last confidant, Flavio Carboni, Sardinian businessman and middleman with the Mob; Pippo Calò, the "financial director" of Cosa Nostra; Francesco "Frankie the Stranger" Di Carlo, who used to be the Mafia's man in London; and the alleged killer, Vincenzo Castilo. These are the first murder charges brought in the case, spurred by revelations of Mafia penitents, or turncoats. Calvi, allegedly, had embezzled their

BY RUPERT CORNWELL

money and had received the only possible punishment. That may or may not be so. But to one thing I can testify. He was a man who lived in fear.

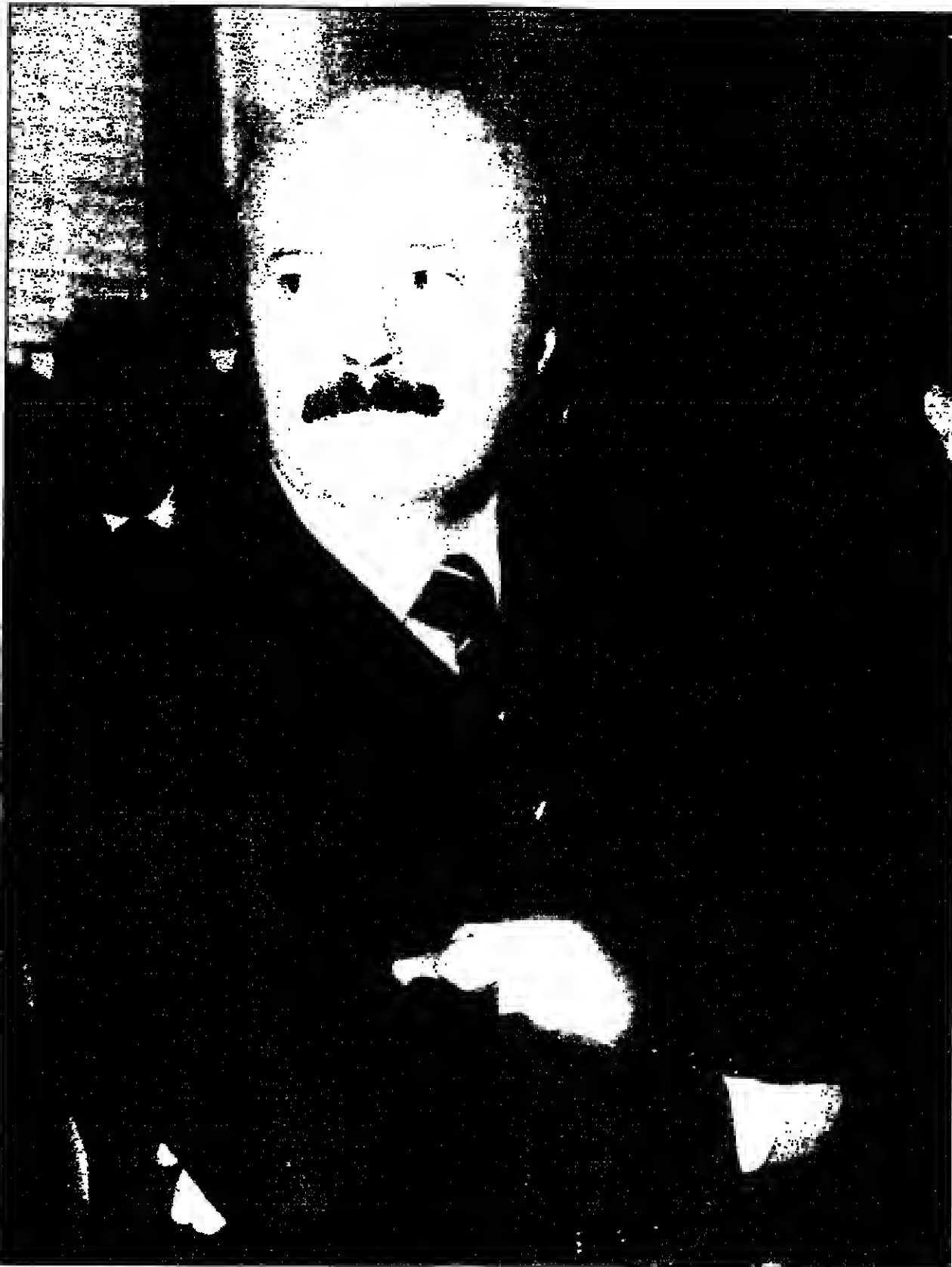
I met Calvi on 17 April 1982, two months to the day he died. He was passportless, awaiting sentencing after being convicted of currency offences. Palpably, the net around him was tightening. I was the *Financial Times* correspondent in Rome; in Calvi's typically roundabout fashion, after vetting lunches with intermediaries, I had been offered an interview – a last attempt by a man who normally loathed the press to persuade other bankers and the business and political élite of Italy that all was well at Banco Ambrosiano.

We spoke in a windowless anteroom in the bowels of his office building. He was nervous and drained, slumped in a chair. As he answered my questions, he drummed his fingers on the edge of his desk. Everyone was conspiring against him, he said; why could he not just be left in peace? My last sight was of a slightly overweight man slouching wearily away down an ill-lit corridor. Little did I imagine that, 17 months later, I would be publishing a book about him.

The article I wrote for the *FT* was even-handed, but would quickly appear ludicrously naïve. Within weeks, Ambrosiano's fate was sealed. Carboni, his last protector, accompanied Calvi to London, a city he barely knew and where Ambrosiano did not even have an office. The conclusion of the Rome magistrates is the Sardinian was leading him to a pre-arranged death.

The Mafia "confessions" are the biggest development in the story for 10 years. But even they may amount to little, for these are thieves without the slightest honour. The story of Calvi is populated by liars and scoundrels. Castilo, alleged to have been the man who strangled him, just happens to have been blown to bits in a car bombing in 1983. Carboni denies everything. So who to believe?

To this day, no important witness has come forward. On the Thames, no-one heard or saw anything. Of course, hanging yourself from a bridge is a peculiar means of suicide if in your hotel room you have a suitcase full of barbiturates. But drugging someone and then balancing on a boat to string him from scaffolding is an equally odd method of murder.



Roberto Calvi, a 'man who lived in fear'; Banco Ambrosiano (top right); the scaffolding (centre) under Blackfriars Bridge (bottom) where his body was found hanging

And why would the Mafia, allegedly owed huge sums by Calvi, have left \$10,700 stuffed in his pockets? Yes, it might have been a murder dressed up as a suicide. But it could equally have been a suicide intended to look like murder. Calvi had a \$3m life insurance policy.

So we are left, now as then, with three broad possibilities. The first is suicide – not an unreasonable supposition in the case of a man on the run from justice, trapped without friends or valid passport in a foreign city, who learns that the bank he runs has collapsed, leaving the prospect only of ruin, prison and disgrace. Suicide seems to have been the option chosen by Robert Maxwell under marginally less desperate circumstances. So why not Calvi?

The second likelihood, stronger after the 1997 arrests, involves the Mafia. Those who cross the honoured society are usually liquidated by it. Carboni's contacts notably included Di Carlo, who was based in London at the time, handling Mafia drug trafficking. Though he claims to have been in Rome at the time of the murder, he could easily have organised it. And a Calvi on trial in Italy, seeking to buy leniency by telling investigators all he knew, was not an amusing prospect.

But in so exotic a tale, for Calvi to have been the victim of a common Mafia hit would be anti-climactic. Certainly, he was a common criminal. His perverted financial talents aside, he was the most undistinguished and commonplace of men. But he did move amid massive events.

In the last three years of his

life, the tectonic plates of world geopolitics were shifting. There was a Polish pope in undeclared alliance with Ronald Reagan's White House to overthrow the evil Soviet empire. Poland, where nationalism and Catholicism were one, was the epicentre of their labours.

Six months after his death, Calvi's lawyer Giorgio Gregori told me his client claimed to have channelled \$50m to aid the Vatican's Ostpolitik in general and the Independent Polish trade union, Solidarity, in particular. "If the whole thing comes out," he murmured in his conspiratorial way, "it'll be enough to start the third world war." Thus the final, and most sensational theory. It rests, like the second, on the risk posed by a man with nothing to lose, blurring out the truth. Except that this truth would be truly sensational – of how Banco Ambrosiano was financing the church which was financing the trade union which would undermine the country whose loss would set in motion the collapse of the Warsaw Pact and then of the Soviet Union.

In this case, those with the motive would be the CIA and the Vatican. The humble, devout banker from Milan would have been a soldier of the free world, but one too dangerous to allow to tell the tale. Alas, for all the ruthlessness of the two suspects the CIA for decades, the Roman Church for more than a millennium I cannot quite believe it.

Another autopsy will not settle the argument. The initial one carried out by Sir Keith Simpson in 1982 found no evidence of foul play. The soft body tissue

which alone might have yielded a clue has long rotted away. So we may continue to believe what we will – which is the charm of unsolved mysteries.

Each time I pass Blackfriars Bridge, my mind goes back to Calvi's last hours. Once in a while, I even dream about them. But in my dream there are no silent assassins, no

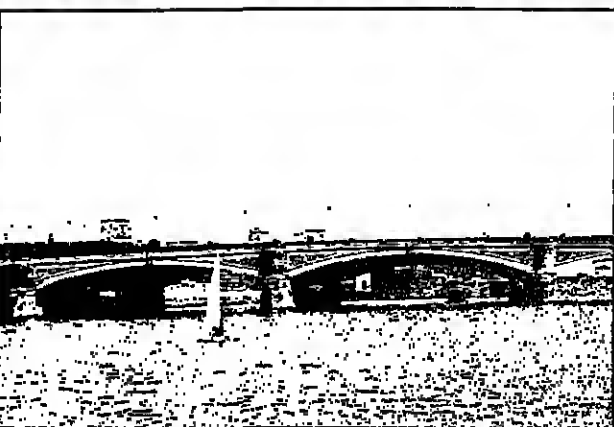
boats slipping along the black river, no cryptic reports of a contract completed. In this dream I see a man broken and with nowhere to turn, leaving Chelsea Cloisters. Perhaps without knowing it, he makes his way towards the river. I imagine him walking east along its embankments, aimless and in despair. Then, at the first

glimmer of dawn there is the bridge, the glimpse of a ladder, the scaffolding, the rope and stones lying in a nearby building site and, finally, the self-inflicted death.

But in another sense, Calvi was murdered – murdered by those he had turned to for help but who merely frightened and plundered him: the IOR, the P-

2, the politicians, the Mafia. Which of them pushed him over the edge, I do not know. But on that June night, death for Roberto Calvi was a damnation – but also a release.

Rupert Cornwell wrote 'God's Banker', a biography of Roberto Calvi, published by Victor Gollancz in 1983



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Magpies net £160m offer

NEWCASTLE UNITED could be following Manchester United into the arms of a corporate owner, after the Premier League football club yesterday admitted receiving a takeover approach from an unnamed suitor.

The offer, which Newcastle revealed in a brief announcement to the London Stock Exchange, would be pitched at around 110p per Newcastle United share, valuing the club at almost £160m.

A successful takeover would mean a bonanza for Douglas Hall and Freddie Shepherd, the disgraced directors who prompted a boardroom exodus when they returned to the Newcastle board last week.

Douglas Hall could expect to pocket a cash windfall worth more than £90m, while Shepherd would receive around £13m. Between them, the duo

BY PETER THAL LARSEN

control 65.6 per cent of the club – enough to wave through any takeover.

The identity of the suitor remained a mystery last night as Sony, the Japanese electronics giant which had been linked with the club, denied it had any interest in Newcastle.

Time Warner, the US entertainment giant and Carlton and United News & Media, the television groups, have also been exploring the possibility of buying a club in the wake of BSkyB's offer.

However, Newcastle stressed that a formal offer would have to wait until the Monopolies and Mergers Commission delivers its report on British Sky Broadcasting's proposed £625m takeover of Manchester United next year.

Newcastle are coached by



Douglas Hall: May receive windfall worth over £90m

charismatic Dutchman Ruud Gullit and its squad includes England striker Alan Shearer. However the team is currently languishing in 15th place in the 20-team Premier League. A successful takeover would

be a remarkable reward for Shepherd and Hall, who were forced to resign from the club in March when they were secretly recorded in a Spanish brothel insulting Newcastle fans and ridiculing Shearer.

Last week they voted themselves back on to the board of Newcastle United plc, the holding company for the football club, prompting the resignation of the chairman and two non-executive directors.

Like other clubs, Newcastle have been at the centre of bid speculation ever since BSkyB announced plans to buy Manchester United.

Its dismal reputation in the City, where investors have lost all faith in the club, has added to the belief that a takeover bid might succeed – even if it was pitched below the 130p at which Newcastle shares were sold to investors last summer.

Pensions for low earners set to double

STATE PENSIONS for workers on low incomes will double under far-reaching changes to the system, the Government announced yesterday.

A long-awaited Green Paper said that the state earnings-related pension scheme (Serps), for those without company or personal pensions, would be replaced by a new "state second pension".

Allister Darling, the Secretary of State for Social Security, told the Commons that up to five million people would benefit from the biggest change to the pensions system in 25 years. A person earning £5,000 a year would currently receive £13 a week from Serps, would receive £26 a week under the new scheme.

The scheme would also boost the pensions of 2.5 million carers - mothers who take a career break after having children, and those looking after sick or elderly relatives. Parents of 200,000 disabled children, and 1.5 million long-term disabled people with an interrupted work record would also benefit.

The scheme is aimed at those who earn less than £9,000

BY ANDREW GRICE
Political Editor

a year but ministers also hope to encourage middle-income groups (earning between £9,000 and £18,500) to take out "stateholder pensions", which would be Government-backed but provided mainly by the private sector.

"Our long-term ambition is that everyone earning more than £9,000 a year should be in a secure, funded, private pension," said Mr Darling. Stateholder pensions would be more secure and flexible, and of higher quality than existing private pensions.

The Government is to spend £500m a year - a total of £5bn over 50 years - to encourage middle-income earners without pensions to join a stateholder scheme by giving them larger National Insurance rebates. This would enable a worker on £12,000 a year to increase their pension income by £1,000 a year.

Stateholder schemes are due on the market by 2001. The Government plans by about 2006 to increase financial incentives for those earning

over £9,000 a year to join one. If they remain in Serps or join the state second pension they will be worse off.

But Mr Darling rejected the idea of making the new system compulsory. "I believe these incentives are fairer and more effective than increasing compulsion," he said. "I do not think it is the Government's job to make life harder for the person on £12,000 with two children and a mortgage to pay. I want to help middle earners, not penalise them."

The Minister said that forcing low earners to save would not guarantee them an adequate pension, as they could not afford the contributions, while it would be "perverse" to order the well-off to save more than they needed. The issue of compulsion for the self-employed would remain under review.

The Government will encourage the one million employees who opt out of company schemes to sign up. Firms will be allowed to make joining a condition of employment unless employees can show they will be better off taking out another scheme.

If the Government did not



Alistair Darling visiting Sainsbury's headquarters yesterday when he announced the pensions reforms Tom Craig

act now, Mr Darling said, one in three of today's workers would be forced to rely on Income Support in retirement.

Despite the injection of taxpayers' money through higher rebates, the state share of the nation's pensions bill will decline in the long term, as people make more provision for themselves. Now 60 per cent comes from the Government and 40 per cent from individ-

als - a share-out that Mr Darling promised to reverse.

"Everyone who can save for their retirement has a responsibility to do so," he said. "In turn, the Government has a responsibility to provide security for those who cannot save enough."

Mr Darling said his radical, affordable scheme would reduce the number of pensioners relying on means-tested bene-

fits. But for today's pensioners, the Government would bring in a minimum pension guarantee in April, which would give 1.5 million pensioners almost £400 a year extra. It would be worth £75 a week for a single pensioner, and £116 for a couple.

This would, in effect, build Income Support payments into the basic pension, but it would not be payable to those with

other income - such as from company schemes.

Mr Darling said that he hoped the minimum pension would be increased in line with earnings rather than prices in the long term.

He pledged that the basic state pension - which increases to £84.70 for a single person and £103.40 for a couple in April - would remain, and would not be means-tested. But it would

MAKING ENDS MEET

Examples from the Green Paper:

1. Man starts work at 16 as £6,500p.a. mechanic. From age 40 has short-term jobs; goes part-time at 60. No private pensions. Current income: state pension of £49 a week. New system: state pension of £82 a week.

2. Female graduate, takes £14,500p.a. insurance job. After marriage stops work to raise three children. Returns at 35, earning £12,000 and retires at 65. Current income: state pension £32, personal pension £65. Total £97 a week. New system: state pension £42, personal pension £74. Total £116 a week.

3. Man leaves college at 20, becomes lab assistant. Joins multi-national, retires at 60 on £15,000 salary and company pension. Current income: state pension £32, company pension £119. Total £151 a week. New system: state pension £32, company pension £134. Total £166 a week.

continue to rise in line with prices rather than earnings and so would decline in value.

The Minister said that it would cost £30bn to restore the link between the basic pension and earnings, which was severed by the Tories in 1979. This would give money to better-off pensioners who did not need it while the poor would be better protected by the guaranteed minimum income.

Search for Iona victims suspended

SEARCH TEAMS trying to locate the bodies of three men, missing after their dinghy capsized off a tiny Scottish island, were officially stood down last night as hopes faded for recovery.

Coastguards said that the operation would be suspended until the weekend and then widened. Experience has taught them that if the bodies do not appear within the first two or three days it could be a week or more before they are finally washed ashore.

"From an official point of view, we are standing down. It will give the men a chance to have a rest," said Kenny Devine, the Oban sector manager for HM Coastguard. "But the police will still be here, as will the volunteers. These are local people and they want to do what they can to get a result and find the bodies."

"The mood amongst the search teams is sombre. They are very disappointed that they have not been able to find anything."

"After the first day, when there were a number of finds, people had been hopeful of finding more, but that has not been the case. But they are still determined to carry on."

It is now more than four days

BY ANDREW BUNCOMBE
on Iona

since the five men capsized as they returned to Iona after a Christmas dance on the neighbouring island of Mull. The sole survivor, Gordon Grant, 33, managed to swim ashore and raise the alarm.

The body of Robert Hay, 23, was washed ashore shortly afterwards. Logie MacFadyen, 24, Alisdair Dougal, 19, and David Kirkpatrick, 23, are still missing. All the men lived and worked on Iona.

The tiny community, which has fewer than 90 residents, was in a dark mood yesterday as it waited for news from the search team.

One local woman, who did not want to be named, said: "You only have to use your imagination to know what it's like. Imagine the worst and you are probably not far from the truth."

"This is a tiny community and there is not a person here who has not been affected by what has happened."

The Rev David Taylor, the local Church of Scotland minister, has been visiting the families of the victims. He has also been giving support to the

search teams returning each evening at 4pm as darkness falls.

"The men are going out to look for the bodies of their own sons," he said. "They are coming home at the end of the day and they are frustrated and exhausted. Their emotions are churning."

"At 4.30pm yesterday, the men had returned to the island and they had not found anything. There was a sense of despair and there was no comforting them. I think it would help a great deal if they could find the bodies."

Mr Taylor said that he had also spoken to Mrs Grant, whose son has left hospital in Oban for an undisclosed location. "She knows that her son will be under great trauma when he gets back," he said.

As force seven gales and driving rain continued to batter Iona last night, coastguards were not optimistic about the chances of finding the men's bodies. There have been previous cases when bodies have been lost at sea for months.

The body of one woman who recently drowned here reappeared several months later, washed ashore on the Isle of Skye, 50 miles to the north.

IN BRIEF

Union must explain £6m loss

The GMB leader, John Edmonds, is under pressure from members to explain a £6m loss from union funds to a company that was dissolved before paying money due for union land. The union was criticised for borrowing £2.5m from its pension fund, allegedly to make up the shortfall. It said the borrowed £2.5m was part of the package tied up before the company reneged on the £6m payment.

'Ear print' nails woman's killer

A MAN HAS been convicted of murdering a 94-year-old spinster on the evidence of an "ear print", in what is believed to be a legal first. Mark Dallagher, 25, from Rotherham, was caught after police matched his ear with an imprint left at the victim's home. Dallagher was jailed for life at Leeds Crown Court yesterday.

Barnardo's worker is jailed

A FORMER house parent at a Barnardo's children's home was jailed for 11 years for "wicked" cruelty and sexual abuse against children in his care. Philip Dunne, 52, of Worcester, repeatedly abused 13 children at the Spring Hill home in Ripon, North Yorkshire, between 1967 and 1974, York Crown Court was told.

Nail spill leaves drivers punctured

DOZENS OF drivers who were stranded for one-and-a-half hours when a lorry crashed into the central reservation of the M4 at Reading and scattered its load of nails drove on to find punctures brought their cars to a standstill. Some drivers got 20 miles before grinding to a halt.

Schools in Wales told 'do better'

BY JUDITH JUDG
Education Editor

WELSH SCHOOLS must do better at A-level, Peter Hain, Education Minister at the Welsh Office said yesterday.

Exam results for Welsh schools show that the average A-level point score per pupil remained at 16 - two Cs and a D - for the third year running. The comparable figure for English schools this year was 17.8. (The point score covers 10 for an A down to 2 for an E.)

More Welsh pupils than ever before were awarded five good grades at GCSE. The percentage of pupils who scored five or more A*-C grades rose from 44 per cent last year to 46 per cent. The comparable figures for England were 45.1 per cent and 46.3 per cent.

At GCSE, the top school was St John's College, a Cardiff independent school, where all pupils achieved five or more A*-C grades. At A-level, another Cardiff independent school, New College, was top with an average of 25 points each.

Mr Hain said he was encouraged that Wales appeared to be closing the gap with England on most key indicators.

HUNTER DAVIES

The young are never ignored. But with age, we all begin to fade

IN THE WEDNESDAY REVIEW PAGE 4

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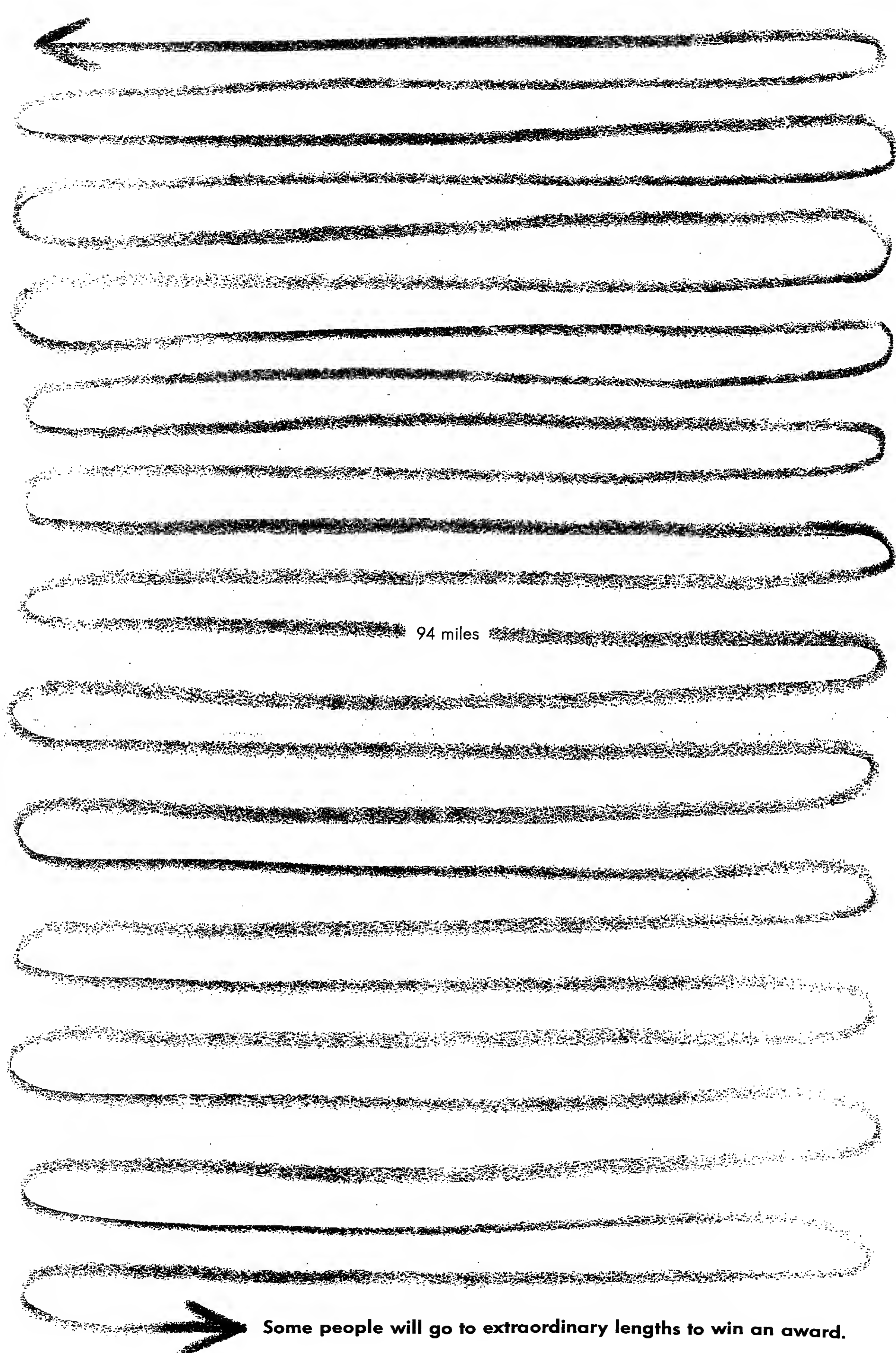
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Police target cars at random

Net surf

Teenage with a sin



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هكذا من الامثل

Police target cars at random

By JASON BENNETTO
Crime Correspondent

MOTORISTS HAVE a random chance of being prosecuted for speeding, with some police forces ignoring those who drive significantly above the limit, an official report revealed yesterday.

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary, which carried out the study, *Road Policing and Traffic*, found that forces in England and Wales operated different "secret" speed limits.

Lack of resources and over-worked staff are partly blamed by chief officers for allowing motorists to escape the law. Inefficient and marginalised policing roads policy was held responsible for the wide variations.

Colin Smith, the report's author, said policing of the roads had become a "Cinderella service", despite an average of 69 deaths on roads each week at an estimated cost of £12.6bn a year to deal with the accidents.

The study of six forces - the Metropolitan Police, Kent, Lancashire, Norfolk, South Wales, and West Mercia - recommended targeting groups of offenders: "drink-drivers, speeders, born-again bikers (middle-aged men who buy motorbikes) or road ragers".

Mr Smith said that, at the moment, a driver prosecuted in one area could have gone unpunished if stopped in another.



The Tate's 1998 Christmas tree, by Richard Wilson (above) and previous efforts, by Shirazeh Houshiary (top left), Julian Opie, and Michael Landy

No fir trees, this is the Tate

By DAVID LISTER
Arts News Editor

SOME DO-IT-YOURSELF shelving appears to have been left by workmen in the entrance hall of the Tate Gallery. But in fact this is Christmas - contemporary-art style.

The Tate has commissioned the artist Richard Wilson, 45, to create its 1998 Christmas tree. He decided that working with a conventional tree was passe, so created one "to express both the order and the chaos of Christmas".

It is formed from basic workshop-style shelving units, decorated with functional storage boxes in primary colours, reminiscent of Christmas parcels, and with bare electric bulbs housed in wire cages.

An artificial tree is suspended within the framework of the shelving. Made from metal, it is skeletal, like the shelving units, and was originally covered with glitter to make it appear festive.

Wilson was hitherto best known for his oil-tank installation, now at the Saatchi Gallery.

A Tate spokeswoman said the tree was certainly a work of art. "The result is sparsely kitsch, intended to evoke both the glamour of Christmas and the empty materialism so often beneath it."

Jahn Voos

BRITISH PSYCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY CONFERENCE

Net 'junkies' surf for nine hours a day

THE INTERNET is generating a new breed of computer junkie who spends an average of more than nine hours a day surfing the Net.

Psychologists have found that the capacity to make anonymous contact with people anywhere in the world is proving so seductive that some people spend all their leisure hours in electronic communion.

Half of the 445 Internet users from around the world who responded to a survey by psychologists at Hertfordshire University, said that they were "addicted" to the Net. They estimated that on average they spent 60 hours a week on line, while the remainder of the respondents said they spent 28 hours on line.

Dr Helen Petrie, who conducted the study presented to the British Psychological Society's London conference yesterday, said: "Sixty hours a week is likely to be an over-estimate. But there are some people who go home after work, lock themselves in the spare room and don't come out again until 2am."

Women were just as likely to be addicted as men. Other surveys show male dominance of the Net is being eroded with the

By JEREMY LAURANCE
Health Editor

proportion of women users up from 6 per cent to 38 per cent in a couple of years.

Dr Petrie said Internet junkies reported doing all the things that ordinary surfers did, only more intently. They sent e-mails, looked at news-groups, played games, shopped and downloaded software.

"Some men admitted to looking at pornography but who knows what the real figures are."

What made the Internet addictive was the "intermittent reinforcement" that came from searching.

"When you surf the Web and click on something, it may not be very exciting but you think the next page might be. If you sometimes get something interesting you keep searching and can lose track of time."

The randomness, allied to the intermittent reward, made it addictive in a similar way to gambling, she said.

Like the casinos kept deliberately dark so punters lost all sense of time, much Internet surfing was done at night.

Dr Petrie said: "It is different from television which is not addictive in the same way. Tele-

vision simply washes over you and fills the time."

The consequences for the addicts could be severe if they neglected themselves or their family and friends. Some seemed to prefer the company of their computers to people.

"We found people who spent more time on line were more depressed, but we couldn't tell whether they were depressed and didn't want to go out and so turned to the Internet or whether spending a lot of time on line made them depressed."

Spreading a little happiness among England's beleaguered cricketers, who this week lost the Ashes to Australia, could help reverse their fortunes, a psychologist claimed at the conference.

Dr Peter Totterdell, of Sheffield University, said teaching players to feel good about themselves was as important as practising in the nets. Research among 33 professional county cricketers showed a clear link between performance and mood.

Happiness, energy, enthusiasm and focus all assisted better performance in batsmen. Among bowlers, mental strain and tension was associated with worst performance.

Teenage girls thrive with a single mother

THE BREAK-UP of a family may be better for teenage girls than if their parents stay together, according to a study.

The strong relationship which tends to develop between sole mothers and their teenage daughters after divorce offers a degree of protection and support which may be lacking in two-parent families.

However, the study found that sons of sole mothers showed signs of greater psychological distress and felt they had less independence and were more controlled.

The study of 156 children aged 15-16 from broken homes showed that teenage daughters of sole mothers were better adjusted psychologically than their peers in two-parent families.

Dr Tony Cassidy of Coventry University, who conducted the

By JEREMY LAURANCE

study, presented at the British Psychological Society's Conference in London yesterday, said there was a danger that in two-parent families the common difficulties of adolescence were dismissed as "typical teenage problems".

In single-parent families, mothers tended to become closer to their daughters, developing a mutually supportive relationship which encouraged the teenagers to achieve and to succeed.

Dr Cassidy said: "It almost sounds as if family break-up is good for girls. The 15-16 group is a difficult age and in two-parent families the problems tended to be endured rather than dealt with. In single-parent families the mother was more concerned to examine the

relationship." With boys, the picture was less clear. They tended to be more distressed by the break-up of the family but the presence of a father figure (the majority of sole parents are still mothers) might have encouraged greater independence.

The level of distress suffered by teenagers depended on the way their families had taught them to cope. Families that tackled problems rather than avoiding them, giving their children the confidence to deal with events, were more resilient. A moderate degree of conflict seemed to enhance their capacity to cope with stress.

Dr Cassidy said: "Families where children feel comfortable about arguing and who encourage problem-solving strategies tend to have better coping skills."

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Widdecombe gees-up wags for some cross-party horseplay

"I'M WILLING to volunteer to be the front or back of the honourable lady's pantomime horse," said Tessa Jowell, unveiling an intriguing New Labour initiative for ending the tired old tit-for-tat of adversarial politics.

Given that Ann Widdecombe was to be her partner in this cross-bench collaboration, the image that formed was a slightly surreal one - one half of the beast would be a dressage pony, slightly nervous and easily startled, the other a political shire-horse, imperturbable and unstoppable. Then again Ms Jowell's remark may have been

more feline than equine, a way of combining the concepts of "Ann Widdecombe" and "back end of a horse" without actually saying anything unpatriotic.

The boos on the Labour benches need no such encouragement. Ms Jowell's peculiar offer had not come out of the blue. It was an on-the-hoof response to Ms Widdecombe's remark that "pantomime season has come early", an unwise sally that allowed Labour members to make some boisterous and unchivalrous suggestions about who might play what. The consensus seemed to be that Ms

Widdecombe would be a shoo-in for the role of one of Cinderella's sisters.

Principal boy, though, was unquestionable Alistair Darling, who had come to make a statement on pensions. I don't want to suggest by this that there is anything effeminate in Mr Darling's manner. On the contrary, he is rather sternly masculine, but there is something a touch cosmetic about his appearance, a sense that the ministerial desk may sport a large mirror surrounded by lightbulbs. I think this is largely to do with the disjunction between his sleek, seal-skin hair and the pitchy blackness of his eye-

THE SKETCH



THOMAS
SUTCLIFFE

brows. What's more, Mr Darling has a manner that can be reminiscent

of the thigh-slapping robustness of the classic principal boy.

He was in a particularly good position yesterday, since the subject was complex and he had a 100-page Green Paper to shelter behind. Not nearly complex enough, though, for some pensions enthusiasts, who had hoped for a far more radical re-invention of pensions provision. He hadn't done that, said Mr Darling, because although it was easy to get together a "convention of pensions rocket scientists" and produce astonishing new systems, the real test was what would get most people into a low-earth orbit,

just beyond the gravitational pull of a penurious old age.

This is what Parliament exists for, of course, to ask the awkward questions the rest of us can't think of, and it looked as if it acquitted itself reasonably well yesterday, with Old Labour backbenchers in particular pressing Mr Darling on the contradictions in his scheme. At least I think they were good interventions, since I, in common with quite a few MPs, understood neither the questions nor the answers.

I did grasp one element of Mr Darling's plans though - the Government is to introduce an annual

pensions statement for every working person. In other words it is going to ensure that the Ghost of Retirement Future rattles its chains in our ears at least once a year.

A slip of paper will arrive and we will sit down to day-dream about what we will do with that unimaginable leisure. Then we will look at the meagre figure in the total column and realise that we will be going down to the local library to keep warm.

Alarming pensioners remains a cardinal political sin, but scaring pensioners to be has just become official government policy.

EU's aid policy attacked by Short

THE SECRETARY of state for International Development, Clare Short, accused the European Union yesterday of diverting much-needed aid away from the world's poorest countries. The minister spoke out as she released figures showing that some Mediterranean nations received more than ten times the level of aid given to other poorer states.

The figures, made available for the first time, prove that countries such as Morocco receive eight times more EU aid per head than Bangladesh and Ethiopia. In terms of European development aid per head in 1996, Jordan got £15.56 compared to 53p in Ethiopia and 6p in India.

Ms Short also said that it was "extraordinary" that wealthy countries such as Brunei, Kuwait and the Bahamas were receiving aid.

Ms Short told the Commons Select Committee on International Development that the UK would be pressing for an overhaul of Europe's overseas aid budget, to ensure the cash was concentrated on the poorest nations. Politics rather than genuine poverty had distorted the budget, she said, and some states were more concerned about keeping former colonies and allies happy than directing aid where it was most needed.

Ms Short said that it was "truly appalling" that the EU now gave only 53 per cent of its Ebn budget to poor nations in

DEVELOPMENT
BY PAUL WAUGH
Political Correspondent

Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, compared to 75 per cent 10 years ago. The UK contributes about 15 per cent of the aid resources spent by the EU.

Many middle-income states in Latin America and the Middle East received much larger sums than India, Bangladesh and Vietnam. Ms Short said that the EU should be persuaded to follow the example of the UK, which directs more than 80 per cent of its development funds at the poorest countries.

"The rhetoric of development is all about the poor and the spending is often political. The reality is 'Oh, we're worried about North Africa, bang them some money' and the net effect is unprincipled application," she said.

The European Commission's management of the budget was "totally inefficient", with some allocations remaining unspent, and the UK would argue for a freeze in coming negotiations. Ministers from EU member states allocate the cash. The Commission administers the spending. A recent report by the OECD showed that for every £1 allocated, 27p was left unspent, largely due to inefficiency by Commission staff.

Most of the unspent money was then returned to national coffers, for general spending.



Gillian Shephard, the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries from 1993 to 1994 and Nicholas Soames, the joint parliamentary secretary at the ministry from 1992 to 1994, arriving to give evidence at the BSE inquiry yesterday

Anger as Blair plays trump card

TONY BLAIR'S threat to use the Parliament Act to push through the "undemocratic" closed list of candidates for European elections was under fire last night as Tory peers provoked a constitutional clash with the Commons.

The Prime Minister's readiness to force through the new voting arrangements was bitterly attacked for giving Mr Blair, not the voters, the final choice over the candidates for European Parliament elections. Speaking ahead of last

EURO ELECTIONS
BY COLIN BROWN
AND SARAH SCHAEFER

night's crunch vote, Lord Strathclyde, the Tory leader in the Lords, said his party would give "one last shot" to defeat the controversial voting method.

"A sixth defeat would be ... unprecedented and illustrate the staunch opposition to this totally undemocratic system which has united all parties," he said. "To use the Parliament Act on a measure ... would look ter-

rible in the history books and the Government should be aware of that."

As the Government threatened to use its powers to get the Bill on to the statute book in the new year, one Labour MEP spoke out against the "atmosphere of fear" surrounding the selection of candidates.

Shaun Spiers, Labour MEP for London Southeast, accused the Labour leadership of purging the Euro-lists of any candidate it considered "too old, awkward, left or eccentric".

Writing in today's Fabian Society quarterly, he said Labour politicians were "willing to regurgitate the pap served up by Millbank [the Labour Party headquarters] because they were probably motivated by ambition, loyalty, and a justifiable faith in the party as an election-winning machine".

Mr Spiers was placed sixth in a list of 10 for the European elections next year in his own area, leaving him with only an outside chance of securing his seat. The voters under the new

arrangements will not be able to choose individual candidates.

"This atmosphere of fear in the party has been reinforced by the European selections where candidates were chosen on their presentational skills and knowledge of the party line - on what they were meant to think, not on what they do think."

The Bill was rushed through the Commons in a single day before last night's clash with the Lords, with the Government using its massive majority to get it through without amendment.

Licence fee for TV to be £101

BROADCASTING
BY PAUL WAUGH
Political Correspondent

THE TV licence fee is to cost more than £100 for the first time in its history, to help the BBC's attempts to recover the cost of its new digital services.

The Government announced yesterday that the licence would go up by 3.7 per cent from next year, but pledged to keep rises below inflation in 2000 and 2001.

Chris Smith, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, told MPs that the fee would rise to £101 for colour and £93.50 for black and white TVs from April.

Under a five-year funding deal inherited from the last government, the fee should rise by just under inflation every year, but the minister said that exceptional spending pressures on the BBC had to be taken into account.

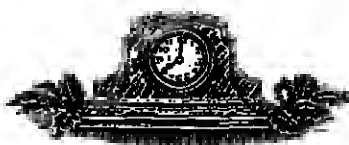
Despite pressure from the BBC to put up the charge even more, the rise would be much smaller after next year, with the fee increasing by 1 per cent under inflation in 2000 and 2.5 per cent under inflation in 2001.

The rises will not affect a separate review into BBC funding ordered by Mr Smith in October. An independent panel, whose chairman is due to be announced soon, will oversee the review.

In a written parliamentary answer Mr Smith said that the licence fee rise was "designed to allow the BBC to plan its business properly" over the next few years.

Peter Ainsworth, the Tory culture spokesman, said that the licence could only be justified if the corporation stuck to its public-service remit and avoided competing with commercial channels for a mass audience.

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Whip moves to stop laptop flap

ANN TAYLOR is to tell MPs that there was nothing sinister behind the removal of computers from the whip's office by Nick Brown, the former Chief Whip, when he moved to the Ministry of Agriculture.

A Tory MP last night tabled Commons questions to Ms Taylor, the Chief Whip, following a report in a Sunday newspaper about the removal of the laptop computers. It raised speculation at Westminster that Mr Brown had some secret information on the computers. But the explanation given last night was that his special advisers were unwilling to learn how to use the Ministry computers.

Whitehall sources said Ms Taylor would be making it clear that there was no secret whips' information held on the computers used by Mr Brown's special advisers. "They had got used to the way they were set up and wanted to carry on using them," said the source.

Ms Taylor billed Mr Brown's

NEW TECHNOLOGY
BY COLIN BROWN
Chief Political Correspondent

advisers for the laptops to be replaced, at a cost totalling around £12,000.

South West Hertfordshire MP Richard Page tabled two written Commons questions about the computers and said he wanted a full explanation of who authorised the payments. He said: "If public money has been spent in this way, we all need to know the reasons why. The public deserves some definitive answers."

A Ministry of Agriculture spokesman said the explanation was that Mr Brown's advisers did not want to retrain when they moved departments.

The spokesman said: "The Ministry paid for the Whips Office to replace the machines at a cost of just over £11,000. Any access to the Whips Office system was removed when they were transferred."

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Dounreay restrictions to stay

THE 2km fishing restrictions around the end of the Dounreay nuclear plant will remain in place after recommendations by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Scottish Health minister Sam Galbraith disclosed.

Outpatient referral numbers up

REFERRALS for outpatient appointments, including those from accident and emergency departments, rose by 97,000 during the first six months of this year while GP referrals rose by 31,000, the Prime Minister said.

Arms contracts secure jobs

THE GOVERNMENT has awarded two ammunition contracts, worth about £200 million and securing 500 jobs, Junior Defence minister John Spellar said.

THE HOUSE



Millennium bug

MARGARET BECKETT, Leader of the House of Commons, has been given an extra minister to help her cope with extra responsibilities for the millennium bug and Government legislation. Paddy Tipping, MP for Sherwood, was yesterday appointed Parliamentary Secretary to Mrs Beckett.

Queen's Awards

THE QUEEN'S Awards for Export, Technological and Environmental Achievement are to be subjected to a wide-ranging review, the Prime Minister announced last night. The scope and eligibility for the awards would be assessed and changed by the year 2000.

Today

Commons: Christmas adjournment debate. Backbench debates: effect of EU Directive 90/220 on British science; permitted development rights of Railtrack; brownfield sites in Teesside. International Development questions. Questions to the Prime Minister. Debate on modernisation of the Commons. Short debate on A14 trunk road in Cambridgeshire. Lords: Debates on Sierra Leone; water fluoridation; supermarket pricing.

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at government policy.

Licence fee for TV to be £101

BROADCASTING
BY PAUL WAUGH
Political Correspondent

THE TV licence fee has
more than £100 for the first
in its history, to help the
attempts to recover the
the new digital service.
The Government announced
yesterday that the fee
would go up by 31 per cent
next year, but pledged to
keep it below inflation in the
year.

Chris Smith, Secretary
of State for Culture, Media
and Sport, told MPs that the
fee would rise to £101 for colour
and £86 for black and white
from April.

Under a five-year
deal, inherited from the
government, the fee for
viewing by just under half
every year on the minimum
of an approved package
starts on the BBC but is
taken into account.

Despite pressure from
BBC to put up the charge
within the rise would be
smaller than other networks
to a maximum of 1 per
cent, inflation in 1998 will
be about 2.5 per cent.

The rise will be paid
by the licence fee payer, but
the BBC will be paid by the
government. An Independent
Media Commission is to be
set up to monitor the fee.

The written promise
from Mr Smith that the
licence fee rise was "not
to be used to fund the BBC's
commercial property" was
not a promise.

Butterfield, the
BBC's spokesman, said
the licence fee could not be
used to fund the corporation's
commercial activities, but
could be used to fund the
BBC's public service role.

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Free calls to freephone numbers	✓		✓	
All international calls 20% less than BT standard rates	✓			
Free switching between tariffs	✓	✓	✓	✓
Free talk time as loyalty rewards	✓			✓
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14 day phone return	✓	✓	✓	✓
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Three million children face life of poverty

CHILDREN BEAR the brunt of poverty in Britain, with more than three million living in households that exist on less than half the average income, according to a new report.

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation has brought together more than 40 indicators of poverty which it is urging the Government to publish in the same way as the Bank of England publishes reports on inflation.

The indicators, compiled by the New Policy Institute for the foundation, include households without work for more than two years and those with long-term illness, and suicide rates. They could be used to update annually how well the Government is combating poverty, said the authors.

They reveal that 10 million live in relative poverty, and while four million working-age adults would like jobs, they cannot get them. Although old age is no longer synonymous with poverty, 60 per cent of pensioners remain in the bottom 40 per cent of income distribution.

Around 30 per cent of people aged 45-64 have a disability or report ill health. The figures rose by a million between 1991 and 1996, with manual workers twice as likely to suffer as the professional classes.

"This is the first time that all these indicators have been brought together and they can be used to make a complete framework which will give us the big picture on poverty and social exclusion," said Catherine Howarth, one of the authors.

The foundation is particularly concerned with the number of children growing up in poverty, with more than 2.5 million living in workless

BY GLENDA COOPER
Social Affairs Correspondent

CHANGES IN PAST YEAR

Getting worse:
Gap between low and median income
Long-term recipients of benefits
Births to girls conceiving under 16
Children in young offenders' institutions
Young adults starting drug treatment
Insecure employment
Older people needing help to live at home
Spending on travel

Getting better:
Children's accidental deaths
Children whose parents divorce
Individuals wanting work
Adults on low rates of pay
Pensioners with no private income
Older people without a telephone
People lacking a bank or building society account
Overcrowding
Mortgage arrears

households. Those living in households below half the average income is 3.3 million.

Those born in the bottom two social classes are 25 per cent more likely to be underweight as babies and are twice as likely to die in childhood accidents.

Worryingly, after falling in the early 1990s, the number of under-age girls having babies is at its highest ever level, with 4,279 giving birth in 1996. Abortions among this age group

run at a similar rate to births.

Young women leaving care are disproportionately represented among teenage pregnancy figures, with between one in four and one in seven young women leaving care pregnant, or as mothers already.

The number of children in young offender institutions has risen by nearly 40 per cent since 1993, to almost 11,000 in 1997. Although girls make up only 3.5 per cent of this group the number has risen proportionately much faster than for boys, almost doubling between 1990 and 1997.

"Children do disproportionately badly," said Ms Howarth.

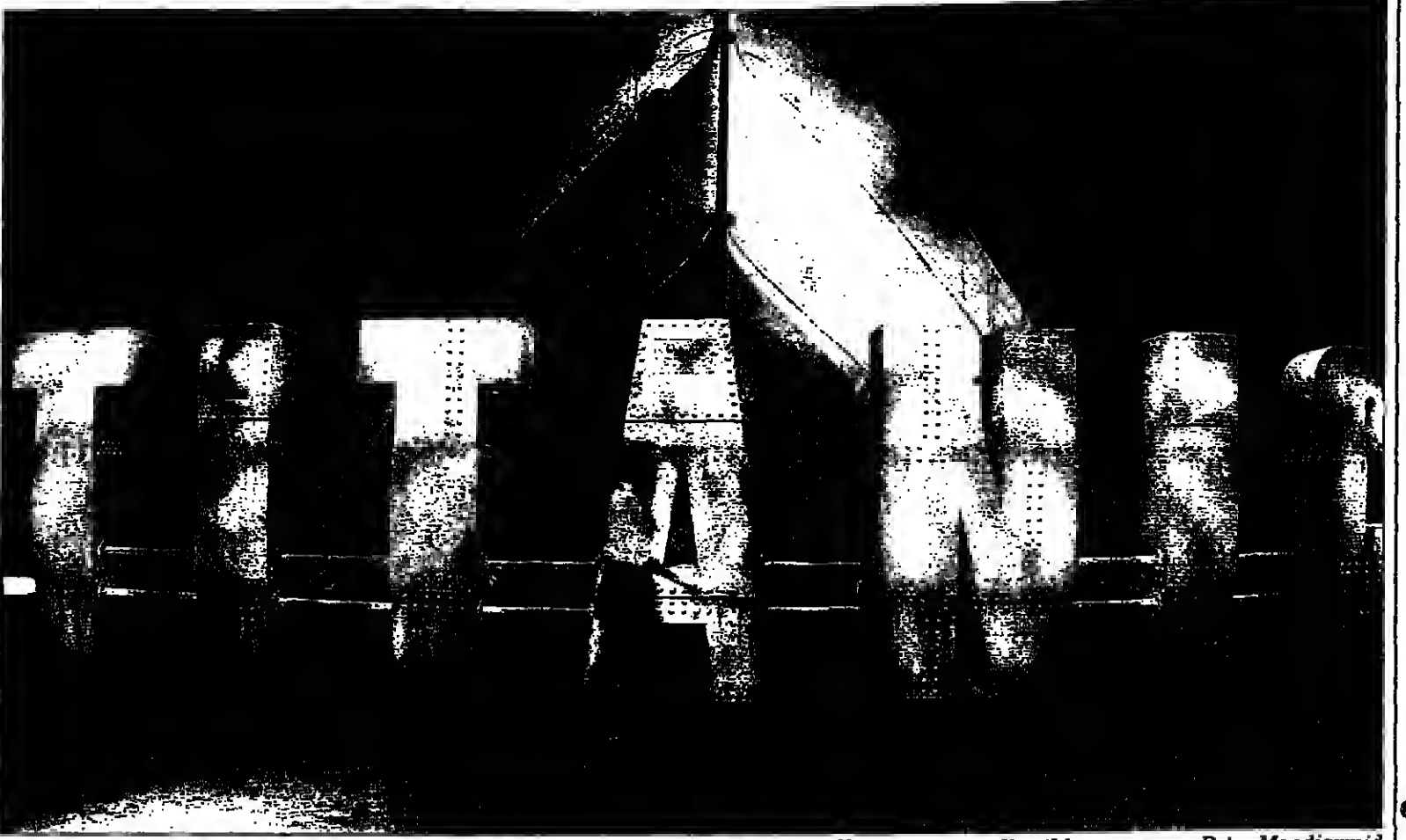
"What's really worrying is that we know from research that a bad start in life is really hard to shake off. If the Government do not put the focus on children they are storing up trouble for the future."

The researchers called for the Government to adopt the indicators so that the scale of the challenge to achieve greater social cohesion can be better known. They suggested that the Office for National Statistics could carry out the annual survey.

"Just as the Bank of England's regular report on inflation has helped to raise the standard of debate about economic policy, so a regular poverty and social exclusion report would increase public awareness and understanding of the needs of a significant minority of the population," said Dr Peter Kenway, director of the New Policy Institute.

"An official but independent report on progress would underline the Government's commitment to meeting those needs."

'Titanic' turns disaster into a theme park



A 12ft sign greets visitors starting the tour dedicated to the film which was a box office success earlier this year

Peter Macdiarmid

IT WAS A disaster. It became a movie. Inevitably, it is now a theme park.

Titanic - Official Movie Tour opened last night heralding a life after death for blockbuster. Twentieth Century Fox and a company called Special Entertainment Events have rebuilt part of the film set at an exhibition hall adjoining Wembley Stadium. For £12 (£8

BY DAVID LISTER
Arts News Editor

for children) visitors can walk through the first-class hallway, see the grand staircase and wander through sets from first-class to steerage.

On the way there are interactive listening posts where the director, James Cameron, and the stars, Kate Winslet and

Leonardo DiCaprio, talk about the film.

The real special effects are saved for the "sinking corridor" and the "disaster theatre" at the end of the tour, where the final moments of the Titanic are recreated on a set of screens. The ground shakes and water is seen. But seeing water is as close as visitors will get to the less glamorous side

of the Titanic experience. "This is a way of capturing the spirit, romance and adventure of the movie - it is not a log flume," said a spokesman a little sniffily.

The set is also a novel venue for corporate hospitality. Fox and Sky TV have booked corporate banquets. As Fox and Sky supremo Rupert Murdoch will have noticed, an official

movie tour can have a longer life than the original movie. A Star Trek tour is still doing big business in Germany. After Wembley, Titanic moves on to Holland, France, Germany and Italy.

We await the truly British equivalent - perhaps the Ken Loach official movie tour. Meet you round the back of the social services office.

Test-tube success rivals natural birth.

ADVANCES in test-tube baby treatment have boosted success rates for infertile couples to almost twice that achieved by natural conception.

Figures from the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority show some clinics achieving live-birth rates of 30 to 40 per cent per attempt, com-

BY JEREMY LAURANCE
Health Editor

pared with 20-25 per cent a month for sexual intercourse. The Assisted Reproduction and Gynaecology Centre in London achieved 41.8 per cent live births per embryo transferred to the womb.

The figures, released yesterday in the authority's annual *Patients' Guide to IVF Clinics*, show the overall success rate has risen again, as it has in every year for the past decade, to 21.8 per cent per embryo transfer. The authority said the guide was interim, because the figures have not

been adjusted to take account of the types of patients treated.

The main factors that determine success are the age of the woman, the length of time the couple have been trying to have a family and the quality of the man's sperm.

■ Cannabis smoking can make it more difficult for couples to

conceive, according to American researchers. A study of the effects of compounds found in marijuana on human sperm showed that they inhibit the release of enzymes that enable the sperm to penetrate the egg, alter the swimming patterns of the sperm and prevent sperm from hatching to the egg.

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Impeachment crisis: The White House needs to woo 20 senators in vital vote, as intellectuals back President at rally

More Republicans turn on Clinton

THE WEIGHT of political opinion moved further against President Bill Clinton yesterday, with key Republicans speaking out for his impeachment.

As the President flew back from the Middle East last night, more Republicans moved against him. And without a dramatic gesture from the White House, his advisers seem to be pessimistic that he can escape a vote on impeachment by the House of Representatives tomorrow or on Friday.

There are four articles of impeachment laid against the President in the House, relating to alleged perjury and ob-

BY ANDREW MARSHALL
in Washington

struction of justice in the investigation into his affair with Monica Lewinsky. A vote would lead to a trial in the Senate which could mean that Mr Clinton is removed from office.

The White House was considering a number of moves to galvanise support, including a televised address to the nation and an appearance on Capitol Hill. But the rampant speculation about what he might do, accompanied by a fresh casting around for ways out of the apparent impasse, was partly a reflection of the disbelief that

the President might be sliding gradually towards disaster.

Robert Dole, the former Republican Senator who was defeated by Mr Clinton for the White House in 1992, yesterday offered a compromise to avoid impeachment, replacing it with a resolution in the Senate that would condemn his behaviour but leave him in office.

The step-by-step procedure would end before the new year. It "would demonstrate to the vast majority of Americans that Republican congressional leaders will fulfil their constitutional responsibilities, clear the decks and move forward when the 106th Congress convenes,"

he said in an article in the *New York Times*. The *Washington Post* has backed a congressional censure in a leading article.

Republican leaders in the House have so far ruled out any initiative that would circumvent the impeachment procedure.

The Republicans have a slim majority of 238 to 206 with one independent. At least three Democrats will vote for impeachment. So the White House needs about 15 Republican votes to escape. There were estimated to be at least 20 who were wavering, but that number gets smaller every day.

One Republican who had opposed impeachment said

yesterday that he would now back it. Jack Quinn of New York said that the issue was "about principle, not about politics". Fred Upton of Michigan, John McHugh of New York and Tom Campbell of California, who had been counted as undecided, also came out against the President.

Today, Mr Clinton will meet Christopher Shays, a Connecticut Republican who had opposed impeachment but says he is now undecided.

But the White House's inability or unwillingness to reach out to Republicans has been commented on with increasing incomprehension in Washing-

ton. The President's supporters have mobilised grassroots campaigns, and television and radio advertisements are running to back him. This may not be enough.

He retains enormous popular support, with 61 per cent opposing the idea of impeachment, according to an opinion poll by the *Washington Post* and ABC News. But only 29 per cent said they would be angry if he were impeached; another 29 per cent would be dissatisfied, but not angry.

And ominously for the President, 58 per cent think that he should resign if the House votes to impeach him, even before a Senate trial.

It would be unwise to ignore the President's remarkable ability to fight back against his critics. He has repeatedly demonstrated a flair for coming back off the ropes, exploiting his personal political skills.

Equally, the White House has several times exploited its management of expectations to help the President to gain unexpected victories.

The looming sense of darkness in Washington, as impeachment becomes a real prospect, may yet persuade some Congressmen to change their minds. The stock market has taken fright as the vote approaches. For these reasons

and more, the mainstream judgement in Washington has been that Congress would shy away from removing the President, and that some way would be found to avoid the fatal step.

But that seems more and more difficult to see. And the judgements of Washington and its denizens have not been particularly good so far in plotting the course of the proceedings against the President.

Time magazine yesterday summed up the mixture of uncertainty, fascination, and nausea with a silhouette of the President, and a headline in lurid red letters: "Will they really do it?"

Celebrities lend weight to case for the defence

IF SOMEONE has a video of the rally held at the New York University School of Law this Monday evening, they should give a copy to President Clinton. One by one, they denounced the Republican drive for his impeachment and removal from office - historians, writers, Nobel prize winners, and one Hollywood actor.

For sure, nobody among the Republicans may pay heed. This was a luvvies-for-Clinton kind of deal - all warmth for the embattled President and angst for the Republic and its Constitution. But these were luvvies with intellectual stature, except for the Hollywood hard man Alec Baldwin. For the 750 souls who crowded in to listen, it was a night of electrifying eloquence and high indignation.

The writer EL Doctorow, his voice quavering at the microphone, had this message for those who would overthrow the President: to do so, he said, would constitute "the unseating of a democratically elected president - with all the legitimacy of a coup d'état".

The very soul of America was being threatened, Mr Doctorow insisted. "If Mr Clinton is impeached, or tried, or forced to resign, American patriotism, with its punitive just and autocratic and theocratic vision, will be reborn for the 21st century."

"We are going through this

BY DAVID USBORNE
in New York

constitutional crisis because this President lied to the American people. I've been trying to think of a president in my life who didn't lie to the American people."

Recalling the illegal arm sales to Iran to fund right-wing contras in Nicaragua by Presidents Reagan and Bush, and Lyndon Johnson's distortions during the Vietnam War, Mr Doctorow said: "Perhaps the problem with President Clinton's lie is that it lacked grandeur."

The coup d'état was a common theme of the night. Jerry Nadler, a Democrat representative and member of the House Judiciary, thundered to mighty applause: "If a trial starts in the Senate we may be able to find out who started this coup d'état, and who paid for it."

For the Nobel Prize winner Eli Wiesel it is the battering of Mr Clinton that must end. To Republicans, he said: "We appeal to you to put an end to the humiliation that President Clinton has been subjected to for three years. Public humiliation is a sin equal to bloodshed. For the sake of our collective honour, we plead with you to do what so many of us wish you had done earlier: censure the President for his actions."

Gloria Steinem, an icon of



The writer Toni Morrison applauding a speech by fellow Nobel Laureate and author Eli Wiesel at the rally supporting President Clinton. Lynsey Addario/AP

American feminism, was also at the rally. Women, she said, "will not stand by as a Congress that is 90 per cent men attempts to remove the first president elected by women voters."

By attacking the President for his affair with the intern, Monica Lewinsky, Republicans were sabotaging the progress made on sexual harassment of women, Ms Steinem said. "The right wing

is succeeding in destroying sexual harassment law."

The meeting, organised by an ad hoc group, Americans Against Impeachment, also had a man of God at the ready. The Rev Paul Moore, former Episcopal Bishop of New York, reminded Republicans of the familiar Biblical homily: when Jesus addressed the mob as it prepared to pelt the adulteress, he said: "Let he who is without

sin cast the first stone." The Bishop noted: "The onlookers all slunk away. I wish someone had said that to the Republicans."

The consequence of impeaching President Clinton, several speakers suggested, would be to destabilise the political and constitutional bedrock of the Union. It would open the way for opposition parties to try and unseat future

presidents on trumped-up charges.

"The political stability that we have known for 200 years is not a gift of providence. It does not happen by chance," warned Robert Torricelli, a Democrat Senator from New Jersey.

Mr Baldwin, in the end, brought the house down by mimicking a fictional southern Republican agonising over what he should do, even as the

polls continue to show that a sizeable majority of Americans do not want impeachment.

But he offered serious points too: "I am not a lawyer but I know that in a trial you are meant to be judged by a jury of your peers. In the partisan filth that we have now in this country, with the Republicans we have in the Senate, how can they be viewed as peers of President Clinton?"

WHAT WILL HAPPEN NOW?

Is President Bill Clinton going to be impeached? Starting on Thursday, the House of Representatives - the lower House of Congress - will consider four charges against him. If they decide by a simple majority to impeach him, the issue is passed to the Senate to decide.

What are his chances of getting away with it? The Republicans have a narrow majority in the House. Some Democrats - probably about three - will vote for impeachment. So the White House needs some Republicans to back the President.

What happens after? The next step is a trial of the President in the Senate. The Senate would need a two-thirds majority to find him guilty.

Is a trial likely? It is possible that the President could just be censured in the Senate.

Can a trial be stopped? A majority of the Senate must agree. If it votes by a two-thirds majority to suspend the rules, the Senate could decide not to begin the proceedings.

Would the Senate find him guilty? The Republicans have a narrow majority. If Democrats vote the party line, then he is safe as a two-thirds majority is needed. But the idea that the Senate would not find him guilty is a reason why people want another way out.

ANDREW MARSHALL

Israel defiant on troop pull-out

ISRAEL YESTERDAY rebuffed President Bill Clinton's attempt to get it to continue troop withdrawals from the West Bank under the Wye Agreement, saying the Palestinians must first meet Israeli conditions.

The meeting between Mr Clinton, Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian leader, and Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister, at the Erez crossing yesterday failed to produce a breakthrough. Earlier Mr Netanyahu said the Palestinians should not be rewarded for revoking the previous day, anti-Israel clauses in the Palestinian charter. "Arafat should have cancelled the covenant five years ago. I have no intention of granting him a prize for that."

After the Erez meeting he said the Palestinians had to meet a number of Israeli demands before the Wye accords are implemented. They include a renunciation by Mr Arafat of any intention unilaterally to declare a Palestinian state, ac-

BY PATRICK COCKBURN
in Jerusalem

cepting Israel's criteria for the release of prisoners, and clamping down on anti-Israeli incitement.

Mr Clinton sought to put a more optimistic gloss on the results of his visit. "We now have to decide practical means to go forward and I think we are well on the way to doing that." An American official said the US expected the troop withdrawals to go forward quickly.

US strategy during Mr Clinton's three-day visit to Israel and the self-ruled Palestinian enclaves has been to ignore provocative statements by Mr Netanyahu, hoping they are largely directed at the ultra-nationalist far right in Israel. He is not likely to win a vote of confidence in the Knesset next week if the far right votes against him.

After the Erez meeting Mr Clinton went to Bethlehem, the Palestinian enclave 10 min-



Bill Clinton with Mr and Mrs Netanyahu at Masada

utes' drive from the centre of Jerusalem, where he lit a Christmas tree and visited the Church of the Nativity. He then went to Masada, where Jews fought to the last against Roman legions in AD73 at the end of the Jewish rebellion.

Mr Clinton was dogged on his trip by questions about impeachment. Asked if he could separate his personal prob-

lems from his official duties, he said: "Absolutely. You need to turn up to work every day. It is not a complicated thing." Mr Netanyahu may calculate that with Mr Clinton possibly facing trial by the Senate next year the White House will be in no position to put pressure on Israel.

But Palestinians are relishing the deepening confrontation between the administration

and Mr Netanyahu. They were also quick yesterday to accuse Mr Netanyahu of preventing Mr Clinton from reviving the Wye agreement.

At the same time Mr Arafat is jubilant that, verbally at least, the Palestinians are being treated by the US on an equal footing with the Israelis. They were almost as surprised as Israelis to find Mr Clinton telling them in Gaza that he recognised the "the right of the Palestinians to live free today, tomorrow and for ever."

Mr Clinton's departure without any agreement on the release of prisoners whom the Palestinians want see free may lead to a resumption of the riots and rallies that halted while he was here.

If Mr Arafat tries to suppress the riots he will face accusations from Palestinians that he is betraying men who had acted under his orders simply to please Mr Clinton.

Robert Fisk, Review, page 5

Fury at remark on Palestine children

NOTHING HAS created such fury among Israeli leaders as President Bill Clinton's comparison, during his visit to Gaza, between the grief of Palestinian children whose fathers are prisoners in Israel and that of Israeli children whose parents were killed by Palestinians.

"These children brought tears to my eyes," Mr Clinton said. "We have to find a way for both sets of children to get their lives back."

Israeli reaction was both angry and immediate. Ben-

BY PATRICK COCKBURN
in Jerusalem

jamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister, said: "There's a world of difference between the children of murderers and their victims."

Mr Clinton was comparing the fate of the children rather than the fathers, but this point was overlooked as Mr Netanyahu asked Madeleine Albright, the US Secretary of State, if the US was "willing to release the terrorists who car-

ried out the attack on the Twin Towers [World Trade Centre] in New York."

Mr Clinton probably did not realise the shock to Israelis of having the moral high ground taken away from them so publicly. Nahum Barnea, the Israeli commentator, wrote that for the first time, President Clinton "equated the sufferings, fears and aspirations of the Palestinians with the suffering, fears and aspirations of the Israelis."

He added that seeing the US President treat the struggle of

the two peoples as morally equivalent hit a deeper nerve in Israel than withdrawal from the West Bank.

Mr Clinton met the four Palestinian children when he saw Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian leader, in Gaza. He had met the Israeli children the previous day in Jerusalem.

Nihad Zakout, 11, a Palestinian whose father had killed an Israeli, told him: "I've been deprived of touching him for 10 years." The President replied: "Thank you for coming to see

me. Your father would be very proud of you."

None of this was out of the ordinary. But in the next few hours President Clinton and his advisers decided that equating the plight of children deprived of parents as a result of the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians was a good way of illustrating his theme that each side had to recognise the sufferings of the other.

The explosion which followed showed that this is not going to happen soon.

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Paris clears itself of Rwanda killings

A PARLIAMENTARY inquiry yesterday cleared France of any direct complicity in the genocide in Rwanda in 1994, in which 800,000 people are thought to have been killed.

A nine-month investigation by a parliamentary committee, the first of its kind, criticised the authorities for blindly supporting the Hutu-led government and armed forces of Rwanda before the massacres began. But France was "in no way involved", actively or passively, in the mass murder of the minority Tutsis and moderate Hutus which followed the assassination of Rwanda's Hutu president in April 1994.

"The first point that should be recalled is that those who killed Rwandans were other Rwandans," the report said.

The French MPs say the wider blame for the slaughter, the first officially recognised genocide since the Holocaust,

BY JOHN LICHFIELD
in Paris

must rest with the international community as a whole, and especially the US. The report says scores of thousands of lives could have been saved by the deployment of a United Nations peace-keeping force, but action was blocked by Washington, which was numbed by the failure of its intervention in Somalia the previous year.

The inquiry's result will be a disappointment, but no surprise, to those inside and outside France who pushed for an investigation of its role in Rwanda before and after the massacres.

Articles in *Le Figaro* earlier this year said the French authorities were aware, or ought to have been aware, that the Hutu-dominated government and the French-trained

Rwandan armed forces were preparing to slaughter the Tutsi community. The articles also claimed Paris continued to supply arms to the government in Kigali after the massacres began.

It was also claimed that the then French president, François Mitterrand, operated a clandestine Rwandan policy in the early 1990s. Although France was publicly committed to peace negotiations between the two Rwandan ethnic, or social, groups, Mr Mitterrand was deeply suspicious of the Tutsi rebel leaders, who were based in neighbouring Uganda. Since they had lived mostly in exile, speaking English, under Ugandan and American influence, he believed they posed a threat to French interests and the survival of the French language in south-central Africa.

The report of the parliamentary inquiry accepted this

argument and condemned the "institutional dysfunctions" in the then French government. It said France found itself "trapped by its own [pro-Hutu, anti-Tutsi] strategy." As a result, Paris allowed itself to be manipulated by the extremists in power in Kigali, instead of pressuring them to adopt a more pacific approach.

But the report says these criticisms do not support the "unacceptable accusation" that France was complicit in the genocide.

A rebel faction aiming to take over the anti-immigrant National Front said it would hold an extraordinary congress in Marnay-la-Vallée, near Paris, on 24 January to confirm its split from the party leader, Jean-Marie Le Pen. Bruno Mégret, the technocrat battling to take power, says he has enough support within the Front to have Mr Le Pen voted out.



Students showing support for President Saddam Hussein in Baghdad yesterday. Iraq is pressing the United Nations for a review of sanctions in the hope of having the eight-year-old embargo lifted. Karim Sahib/AFP

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Indian holy man held for 38 rapes

THE SADHUS of India, ascetic Hindu holy men, usually wear no clothes at all, but until this week it was unusual for this province to be given a sexual interpretation. This may now change, for on Sunday police in Banaras, the holiest city in the country, arrested a sadhu, named Swami Yogeshwaranand Maharaj, for allegedly raping 38 women over the past six years.

The "swami" (or "sage") claimed to possess spiritual powers that enabled him to cure women of barrenness. Banaras police chief Dinanath Pandey said: "Over the past six years, many childless couples had visited the sadhu and pleaded for help."

"The sadhu used to ask the women to stay back at his home for a few days, on the pretext of performing rituals. He would then administer drugs to the women and then rape them."

This underhand behaviour nonetheless often had the desired effect, according to the police chief, and many of Maharaj's victims subsequently became pregnant - with the sadhu's babies. And overcome with gratitude for the baby, they also became his ardent disciples, without realising that the father of their long-desired child was not their husband but the so-called holy man.

But Maharaj ran out of luck

BY PETER POPHAM
in Delhi

last week when his latest client regained consciousness while he was in the act of raping her and was able to run away.

All might still have been well for him, but the woman happened to be closely related to a senior police officer and an investigation was begun.

Sadhus have an extremely ambivalent reputation here. Many simple people esteem them highly for their austere spiritual practices and apparent devotion to an austere life of meditation and mortification of the flesh.

But others regard them as decadent, dropped-out ruffians who crave nothing better than a large pipe of marijuana. This being India, both of these views are probably correct.

They are also regarded as the stormtroopers of militant Hinduism, and after the victory of the Hindu nationalist BJP in the general election this spring, massed naked sadhus rampaged through a major Hindu festival in the town of Hardwar in a frightening demonstration of strength, fighting with the police.

Their ascetic image took a knock a couple of weeks ago when a photograph in an exhibition in Delhi showed one naked sadhu masturbating another in public.

IN BRIEF

2,500 flee beached cruise ship

MORE THAN 2,500 tourists were safely evacuated from a Caribbean cruise ship that beached off St Maarten after it struck a reef and began taking on water. Fishermen and boat owners helped to ferry all passengers off the 74,000-ton *Monarch of the Seas*, which was bound for Martinique.

New deal on Kurd rebel leader

TURKEY AND Italy are discussing sending Abdullah Ocalan, the Kurdish separatist leader, to Albania for trial on terrorism charges to resolve their dispute over his extradition. Mr Ocalan, who was detained in Rome, is wanted in Turkey but Italy refuses to return him.

Funeral of Iranian intellectual

ABOUT 3,000 Iranian writers, poets and artists attended the funeral of one of five intellectuals, Mohammad Mokhtari, who was found apparently strangled in Tehran last week. The authorities said several suspects had been arrested in connection with the killings.

Serbs attack observers

SERBS IN Kosovo spat at international observers in the town of Pec and pelted their vehicles after six Serbs died when masked Albanian gunmen went on a shooting spree in a café. On the same day, 31 Kosovo Albanians were killed in clashes on Kosovo's border with Albania.

Earliest writing found in Egypt

A GERMAN archaeologist in Egypt said he had found what could be the earliest known writing by humankind - records of linen and oil deliveries from 5,300 years ago in southern Egypt, challenging the belief that the first people to write were the Sumerians of Mesopotamia 5,000 years ago.

MARTIN JACQUES

The Chinese enjoy a higher living standard than any other group in Britain

IN THE WEDNESDAY REVIEW FRONT

هكذا من الامين

Nobel laureate 'invented life story'

ROBERTA MENCHU, the Guatemalan human rights activist, may have fabricated by passages of the best-selling autobiography that paved the way to her winning the Nobel Peace Prize, according to a forthcoming book by an American anthropologist.

Ms Menchu has campaigned extensively on behalf of the indigenous peoples making up the bulk of Guatemala's peasant class. She painted a searing portrait of poverty and oppression in her book *I, Rigoberta Menchu*, which was first published in Spain in 1983.

Against the background of a bitter dispute between her family and the local landowners, she claims to have been denied all education, and to have watched a younger brother die of starvation and another being burnt alive by troops. Her book also details her pre-teenage years toiling in the fields while participating in an underground protest movement.

But many of these claims were either exaggerated, impossible to verify or were simply fabricated, according to Dr David Stoll, who has conducted

BY ANDREW GUMBEL
in Los Angeles

almost a decade of research in and around Ms Menchu's home town of San Miguel Uspantan in north-west Guatemala.

The land dispute, according to Dr Stoll's account, *Rigoberta Menchu and the Story of All Poor Guatemalans*, had nothing to do with wealthy landowners. Instead, it pitted Ms Menchu's father against his in-laws' family. Dr Stoll's findings were reported at length and largely corroborated in yesterday's *New York Times*.

Far from being unschooled, former teachers and other witnesses said Ms Menchu was educated up to middle-school level and spent a number of years as a scholarship student at a Catholic boarding school. Because she was away with the nuns, it seems highly unlikely that she was also working eight months of the year in the coffee and cotton fields and working as a secret political organiser.

The account of the younger brother dying of hunger was rejected by one of Ms Menchu's older brothers. He told a *New*



Jacques Chirac, the French President, toasts Nobel Peace Prize laureate Rigoberta Menchu (left) on a recent visit to Guatemala

York Times reporter he had two siblings who died in infancy but they were both older than Rigoberta and had died long before she was born. As for the brother whom she said was burnt in front of her and her parents, neighbours and family members say he was kidnapped, handed over to the army and killed far away from his loved ones. Nobody recalled

the mass killing in the village that Ms Menchu described. Nobody doubts the metaphorical truth of Ms Menchu's account, however, as suffering and oppression were all too real, both in her family and in the lives of the peasants among whom she grew up.

Challenged about Dr Stoll's findings, she described her book, accurately, as being "part

of the historical memory and patrimony of Guatemala". But the apparent discrepancies raise questions about the degree of myth used and whether Ms Menchu's book is an autobiography or a propaganda weapon to aid the struggle of Guatemala's indigenous peoples. She has repeatedly refused to answer detailed questions about Dr Stoll's

findings. Dr Stoll concludes that she "drastically revised the pre-war experience of her village to suit the needs of the revolutionary organisation she had joined".

The new evidence raises questions about Ms Menchu's Nobel Peace Prize, awarded in 1992 for the attention she was able to draw to the Guatemalan situation as a direct result of the

popularity of her book. For now, the Nobel Committee in Oslo says there is no question of revoking the prize.

"All autobiographies embellish to a greater or lesser extent," the institute's director, Geir Lundestad, told the *New York Times*. He said Ms Menchu's achievements went far beyond the authorship of her book.

Bigfoot a myth, China declares

By TERESA POOLE
in Peking

WITH ONE giant stride, the "wild-man" of China has stepped off the biological record. He was two metres tall, had long red hair, left 40cm footprints, and was rumoured to have bedded down with peasant girls in central China's Hubei province. But now the Chinese government has decreed that he never existed after all.

In the first official word on the long-debated Chinese "Bigfoot" saga, wildlife experts have squashed the hopes of tourism cadres in the Shennongjia mountain forest region of Hubei where the creature was said to roam, attracting many visitors.

"A number of systematic scientific expeditions have found that all reported sightings of Bigfoot were actually of other wild animals," said Zhang Jianlong, an official at the State Administration of Forestry, in a pronouncement carried by the official Xinhua news agency.

Hubei tourism officials have offered a bounty of 500,000 yuan (£37,000) for the capture of a Bigfoot. Mr Zhang said the government did not support "this profit-oriented activity", pointing out that no one was allowed into Shennongjia natural park without his department's permission.

Searches go back to 1959, mostly concentrating on Shennongjia but also in Tibet, a possible home for the Yeti, an ape-man said to inhabit the high Himalayas. Over the years expeditions have enlisted the aid of helicopters, infra-red detectors, luminous compasses, and night-vision scopes. The best they have come up with are supposed samples of hair and faeces.

The last claimed sighting was in September 1993, when tourists said they had seen three human-shaped animals in Shennongjia. According to Xinhua there have been 114 "sightings" of Bigfoot in 70 years in the region. Unfortunately, no one managed to produce any compelling evidence, such as a photograph.

Life sentence for ripping baby from womb

AN ALABAMA woman has been sentenced to life imprisonment for killing a pregnant teenager and stealing the still-living foetus from her womb so she could pretend she was the child's mother. The decision disappointed prosecutors who were seeking the death penalty.

The sentencing of Felecia Scott, 31, closes a case that drew wide attention because of

By DAVID USBORNE
in New York

the ghoulish nature of the crime. Reading the sentence in a Tuscaloosa courthouse in Alabama on Monday, Judge Gay Lake said he was taking guidance from jurors who had asked that her life be spared.

Scott, who showed no emotion as the sentence was read,

was originally convicted in September of fatally shooting 17-year-old Caretha Curry and slicing out the foetus she was carrying by a crude Caesarean section. The child is now two-and-a-half years old and is living with her father.

Scott, who has two children of her own, had a hysterectomy five years ago. Prosecutors said that she had become

obsessed by her inability to have a third child.

They described how Scott befriended Ms Curry when she discovered she was pregnant. On 31 January 1996, with help from her then boyfriend, Frederick Polson, Scott abducted Ms Curry, shot her twice in the head and proceeded to remove the foetus. According to doctors who testified at the trial, Ms

Curry's heart was still beating as her child was cut from her.

Polson was convicted in a separate trial this year of helping Scott to kidnap Ms Curry but was acquitted of a charge of murder. After Scott had stuffed Ms Curry's body into a garbage bin, Polson disposed of the bin in a mountain ravine. He said, however, that he did not know that Curry's body was inside.

Before the murder, Scott had pretended to her friends and family that she was pregnant. Afterwards, she showed off the child as if she had just delivered it.

She and Polson fell under suspicion after the mutilated body of Ms Curry was discovered in the ravine. Police also found traces of Ms Curry's blood in Polson's car as well as

diagrams of how to perform a Caesarean. Polson was sentenced to 20 years in prison, but is currently free on bond.

Ms Curry's mother, Carolyn O'Neal, expressed anguish that Scott had escaped the death penalty. "She not only took my daughter, she took my grandbaby from me," she said.

Scott said she planned to appeal against her conviction.

Californian suburb where the rich stick strictly to the rules

SAN MARINO is not the sort of community to sport large welcome signs for visitors. All the arriving motorists see is a clutch of warnings: trucks over three tons may not pass; street parking is prohibited between the hours of 2am and 5am; dogs must be kept on a leash at all times.

Along winding residential streets with perfectly trimmed trees and manicured lawns lurk further discreetly posted signs. "No riding bicycles or wheeled toys on sidewalks," one says. "Flying of model airplanes or possession of any motorised racer is prohibited," says another. This is at the entrance to the main public recreation area, Lacy Park.

But these visible prohibitions are only the beginning of the story. According to city rules, home-owners may not leave cars on their driveways for more than 48 hours without risking a fine. Anyone wishing to trim a tree has to seek official permission, and failure to abide by the strict regulations can result in mandatory enrolment in a community-sponsored tree-pruning class.

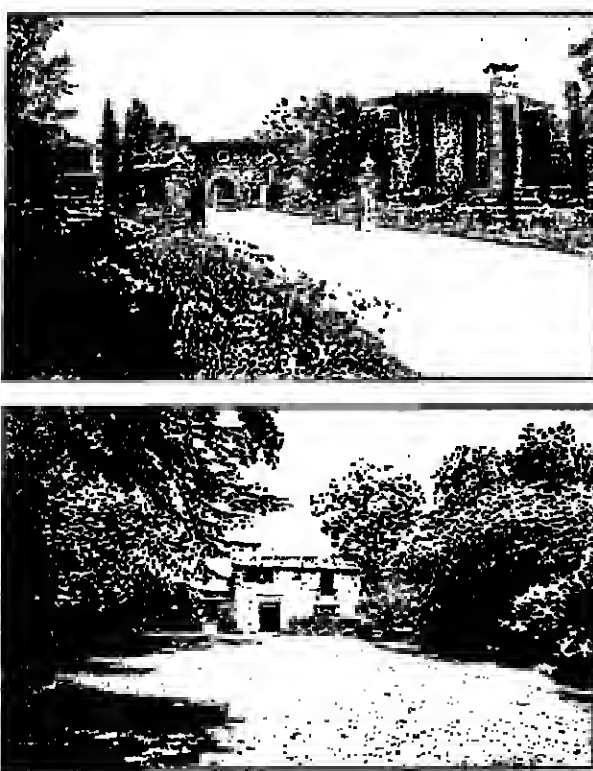
Forgetting to mow the lawn can result in a citation at the local courthouse and a fine. Ditto for those who let their lawn sprinklers dribble on the pavement.

Professional gardeners are encouraged, but only after they have been vetted and issued with an identification tag that must be carried on the job at all times.

Every house has to have a garage with room for at least two cars.

Using a garage for other purposes - for storage, or for office space - is strictly forbidden. In fact, business activities of all kinds are banned in private homes. As is the construction of more than one kitchen. More than one kitchen might encourage tenants, and tenants are strictly forbidden under an

AMERICAN TIMES SAN MARINO



San Marino residents live in a thicket of rules, including restrictions on tree-trimming

ordinance proclaiming that all houses in San Marino must be single family homes.

In laidback, happy-go-lucky, anything-goes California, San Marino is an anomaly. It is probably the most regulated local community in America, if not the world.

What other city would insist on bicycle licences, or pet restrictions limiting households to "a maximum of three dogs or four cats over the age of six weeks?"

Tom Santley, executive director of the San Marino Chamber of Commerce, explained: "People here like rules and orderliness. It all stems from the desires of the residents themselves."

Needless to say, this is a conservative part of the world, a suburb of old, established

money just south of Pasadena, about 10 miles north-east of downtown Los Angeles.

The police rarely show their faces on the streets because they do not need to. If a resident commits an infraction, they soon know it because the neighbours instantly call up to complain.

San Marino was originally the retreat of Henry Huntington, a man who built his fortune from trains and railroads at the turn of the century and established a famous library and botanical garden here beneath the San Gabriel mountains that still attract tens of thousands of visitors each year. He deliberately named San Marino after the secluded principality in central Italy, the last independent city-state in the world.

Originally the rules in San Marino were stricter still - so worried were Huntington and his friends to deter unsightly crowds that they inadvertently banned churches along with all other public gathering places (an oversight corrected in 1940). Although alcohol was always available for consumption at home, it was not authorised in restaurants until last year.

Over the years San Marino's core population of white Protestants from the downtown elite has given way to an influx of new money including, most strikingly, prosperous families of Asian origin. But attitudes have remained the same. "We still like to think of ourselves as the landed gentry," said Mr Santley.

Which is not to say there isn't room for friction. Warren Pedersen, a retired engineering geologist sweeping leaves off his front lawn, explained how his gentlemanly offer to pay for his neighbour's tall eucalyptus trees to be trimmed (to avert possible storm damage to his roof) nearly ended in tears.

"The police said my neighbour had violated a rule protecting branches of more than four inches in diameter and threatened to take her to court. I had to step in to explain what had happened," Mr Pedersen explained. "People take trees pretty seriously around here."

To help new residents through the labyrinth of rules and regulations, the city has produced a guidebook on the main points. It's a hefty volume that explains how front yards may only be 35 per cent cemented over, how political stickers and neon signs are banned, and how vehicles may not be advertised for sale anywhere within the city limits. As a memory aid, there is even a pictorial summary. The summary is entitled: "Do's and don'ts." And it is subtitled: "Mostly don'ts."

ANDREW GUMBEL



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BUSINESS

BRIEFING

Tax breaks for R&D to be unveiled

PLANS to give companies tax breaks in return for increased investment in research and development are expected to be unveiled today by the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry Peter Mandelson. The proposal will be one of the key elements in his White Paper on competitiveness, which will seek to strengthen links between the science base and industry and promote entrepreneurship.

The introduction of tax credits for R&D investment and incentives to attract more venture capital into start-up businesses were foreshadowed in the Chancellor's pre-Budget statement last month. The Prime Minister Tony Blair held a seminar for scientists and venture capitalists in Downing Street yesterday to discuss issues such as funding.

Cox Insurance crashes by £207m

COX INSURANCE Holdings, the Lloyds underwriter, saw its market value crash by more than £207m yesterday after it announced it would shed 150 of its 1,500-strong workforce, and warned profits would be almost 40 per cent below expectations.

Its shares plummeted 45 per cent to 187p as Cox said it would take a £4.3m exceptional hit this year due to an increase in US auto claims, the loss of £1m in its nuclear underwriting business, and the cost of the group restructuring.

The company plans to retreat from businesses such as marine insurance and property, according to Richard Brewster, the finance director.

Brown renews call for 'third way'

GORDON BROWN last night renewed his call for a new order in the world's economies and financial markets in what he said was a "third way" between over-regulation and laissez faire economics.

Speaking at Harvard University, the Chancellor outlined a four-point plan to reduce the risk of future global crises, with measures to improve transparency, enhance surveillance and regulation, form investor networks and establish a global social code.

Mr Brown, who is meeting US Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin and the Federal Reserve's Alan Greenspan in Washington today, said: "What we must together create is a new economic constitution for a global economy."

Inflation on track as key prices fall sharply

BY LEA PATERSON

PRICES OF consumer goods, including shoes, clothing and hi-fi equipment have fallen sharply over the past 12 months according to official figures published yesterday.

The sharp fall in prices of some key goods helped keep UK inflation on target in November for the fourth consecutive month, despite continuing inflation in the services sector.

The underlying rate of inflation targeted by the Bank of England was 2.5 per cent in November, unchanged from October's rate, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) said.

The headline rate, which includes mortgage interest payments, fell by 0.1 per cent to 3 per cent, the lowest since June last year.

The breakdown of the inflation figures, showing some prices falling, increases the pressure on the Bank of Eng-

RETAIL PRICE INDEX UPS AND DOWNS

% changes over 12 months	
Main risers	Main fallers
cigarettes 8	oil and other fuels -17
housing 7.7	audio-visual equipment -16
personal services 7	telephone costs -3
vehicle tax and insurance 7	women's clothing and children's clothing -3
magazine and other subscriptions and fees 6	gardening products -3

Includes subgroups rent, mortgage interest payments, depreciation and building insurance

Source: ONS

land's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) to cut interest rates again in January.

Michael Saunders, UK economist at Salomon Smith Barney/Citibank, said: "We estimate that goods prices have not been as weak for at least 30 years. Looking ahead, we suspect that the MPC's fears of higher inflation in 1999 will prove misplaced."

Prices of clothes and shoes have fallen by 1.5 per cent over the last 12 months, the sharpest fall for 45 years, reflecting the tough trading conditions on the high street. The last time clothing and footwear prices fell by this much was in July 1953, the ONS said.

outerwear and children's outerwear fell by 3 per cent in the twelve months to November.

Dharshini David at HSBC Securities said: "This ties in with the picture of weak retail sales in November, and suggests nervous consumers are likely to prevent high street retailers from successfully rebuilding margins in all high street sectors over the coming months."

Mr Saunders said: "Retailers have reported weak clothing sales in recent months, and it is no surprise prices continue to weaken."

Rising seasonal food prices was the main reason inflation did not fall below target, economists said. Prices of seasonal food such as fresh fruit rose by 0.6 per cent in November.

Over the last 12 months, food prices have risen by 1.8 per cent, according to the ONS, the highest rate of food inflation since October 1996. Soft drink prices - which have risen by 5

per cent - were the primary reason for the increase in the 12-month rate.

Goods inflation continued to languish at record lows, reflecting the weakness of Britain's manufacturing and retail sectors. Prices rose by just 1.1 per cent in the 12 months to November, unchanged from October, and the lowest rate in the series' 11-year history.

Services inflation continues to outstrip goods inflation, and rose by 0.1 per cent to 3.5 per cent. However, economists believe services inflation will soon start to tumble, as the slowing domestic economy takes its toll. November's figures reveal that price increases are already slowing in some parts of the service sector, such as catering.

Ms David said: "As it is now clear that activity is softening in all sectors, it can only be a matter of a few months before services inflation starts to ease."

Green unveils £460m Sears bid plan

BY NIGEL COPE
Associate City Editor

PHILIP GREEN, the maverick retail entrepreneur, finally declared his interest in making a £460m bid for Sears yesterday, although the struggling retail group immediately dismissed the approach as being "highly conditional" and pitched at too low a level.

In a statement issued following pressure from the Takeover Panel, Mr Green said he had formed a private company called Medinbond with a view to making an offer for Sears.

It added: "Mr Green's company has received indicative letters of support from a group of private investors including Tum Hunter, the former chairman and chief executive of Sports Division, stating that if certain conditions are met, cash resources could be made available to facilitate an offer of 300p per share."

The statement added that "any offer which would be wholly in cash, would be conditional upon completion of a satisfactory due diligence exercise and the recommendation of the Sears board."

Sears said the statement did not constitute an offer and that the true value of the company was not reflected by the 300p per share indicated.

Rea Brothers, the investment bank acting for Mr Green, said it was "disappointed" by the response. William Tebbit, one of Mr Green's advisers at Rea Brothers, said: "Their statement would indicate that they are not interested." Mr Tebbit is the son of Sir Norman Tebbit, the former Conservative Party chairman who is a non-executive director of Sears.

Sears' investors reacted coolly to Mr Green's offer. Robert Waugh of Phillips & Drew, which holds 24 per cent of the company, said: "It seems a strange way of going about a bid."

It is thought that major shareholders are unlikely to be interested in the 300-330p per share level. Some institutional investors feel Sears is likely to realise more value by selling Freemans, the store card and its property interests.

Nick Bubb of SG Securities was also sceptical that a full bid would materialise. "He'll do his due diligence and then try to get the price down but he is asking for the board to recommend it. That seems highly unlikely."

Mr Green is thought to have lined up potential buyers for the parts of Sears he is not interested in keeping. Buyers may include Otto Versand, the German mail-order group that may be interested in the Freemans home shopping business, and GE Capital, which may be interested in Creation, the Sears store-card operation. Sears shares yesterday closed 6.5p higher at 259p.



Marston finance director Mike Thompson (left) and chief executive Nick Letchet describe the £262m offer as 'woeful' Andrew Buurman

Marston attacks W&D failure to deliver value

REGIONAL BREWER Marston, Thompson & Evershed went on the offensive yesterday against the £262m hostile bid from Wolverhampton & Dudley, describing the cash and share offer as "woeful".

After the embarrassment of last week when Marston's shareholders forced the company to postpone plans to securitise its tenanted pubs estate, Marston devoted its en-

tire defence document to an attack on the W&D record.

It said 12 years of management under David Thompson had "demonstrably failed to maximise value for W&D shareholders". It claimed figures provided by W&D itself showed that the management had been "destroying value in all parts of their business".

Nick Letchet, Marston chief executive, said the W&D board "had vacillated on their strategy" and that the creation of a "super-regional brewer" would only give the combined company a market share of 3.1 per cent, insufficient against the power of Britain's big four brewers.

He said he would not rule out a merger with another regional brewer, but said this would be based around beer brands and managed outlets, not tenanted estates.

W&D hit back by saying that Marston's document did nothing to advance the debate for industry consolidation. It said W&D had addressed its performance and reported a 10 per cent rise in earnings per share last year compared to an 8 per cent fall in earnings at Marston in the half to September. W&D claimed Marston's strategy was

"in tatters" after it failed to gain shareholder support for its £137m tenanted pubs securitisation, adding that Marston had not questioned its estimate that the merger would yield at least £12m of cost savings.

W&D's offer consists of 182p in cash plus 0.235 W&D shares for every Marston share held. This values the bid at 282p per share. Marston shares closed unchanged at 298.5p.

Banana dispute could slip into trade war

THE TRANSATLANTIC trade dispute over bananas exploded into acrimony yesterday, just days before a full summit between Europe and the United States in Washington.

Amid concern that the row could provoke a full-scale trade war, Sir Leon Brittan, Europe's trade commissioner, accused the US of being "petulant" and trying to "avoid justice by run-

ning away from it". Rita Hayes, American ambassador to the World Trade Organisation (WTO), responded by arguing that the latest move by the European Union amounted to "a mockery" of the global trading system and its rules.

The bitter dispute arose as Brussels braced itself for the publication by Washington of a definitive list of European goods on which the US plans to levy a 100 per cent tariff, unless the EU backs down over banana imports.

Later it emerged that Washington had delayed publication "for a few days" although there was no sign that the US intends to withdraw its tariff threat.

The dispute threatens to overshadow Friday's summit between US President Bill Clinton, and Jacques Santer, the European Commission president.

Washington argues that the EU banana import regime is unfair to South American distributors, most of which are owned by US companies, because it allows preferential treatment for former Euro-

pean colonies, including the Windward Islands.

The WTO has condemned an earlier EU banana import system, but Sir Leon argues that 10 changes have been made and that the EU's new regime complies with all of the World Trade Organisation's concerns.

The US dismisses these as cosmetic and does not want to go through the same WTO settlement procedure, despite the fact that Brussels has agreed to speed up the procedure from 449 days to 170 days.

Yesterday Sir Leon announced that the EU was taking the initiative in asking a WTO panel to hear the case.

If the US did not contest it the EU would assume it was in the right in international law, he said.

AROUND THE WORLD'S MARKETS

LONDON

FOOTSE ENDED a three-day losing streak with a 22.6-point gain to 5,557.1, but supporting shares again gave ground.

Diageo, the spirits group, was the worst-performing Footsie member, down 31.5p to 615.5p on worries that LVMH, the luxury goods group, may cut its 10.84 per cent stake. Advancing blue chips included Vodafone, up 42p to 945p, and BT, up 21p to 881p, boosted by a relatively lenient regulatory review of the mobile phone sector.

Derek Pain, page 18

NEW YORK

US STOCKS rose for the first time in four days as General Electric dragged the Nikkei through the 14,000 barrier, before staging a late rally to finish at 14,011, its lowest level since the start of November, and a 0.7 per cent fall on the day.

Yakuda Trust was still reeling from the government's announcement that NCB would be privatised. Shares plunged by 44 per cent, before recovering to close down 17 per cent, as rumours persist that it has under-reported its bad loans.

TOKYO

SHRUGGING OFF overnight declines on Wall Street, Hong Kong shares reversed the fall of the previous three days, with the Hang Seng closing at 9,952, a rise of 1.3 per cent.

Cheung Kong Holdings, and its affiliate Hutchison Whampoa, both rose by nearly 2 per cent as the property developers announced a salary freeze for Hong Kong-based staff. Dealers were not entirely convinced by the gains, as most investors were still sitting on the sidelines.

HONG KONG

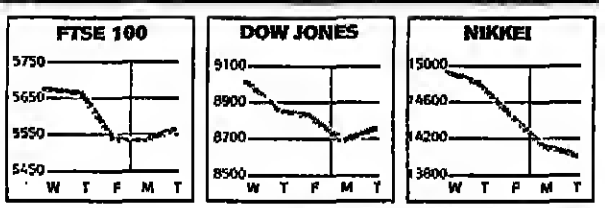
IN A QUIET day's trading, German shares remained largely unchanged, with the benchmark DAX index closing up 0.1 per cent at 4,570.

Deutsche Bank, which is set to become the world's largest financial services company, rose 6 per cent after it announced that it will create a separate unit to manage its industrial investments. The bank said that the structure of the unit will help it reduce the 50 per cent tax it currently pays when it sells an investment for profit.

FRANKFURT

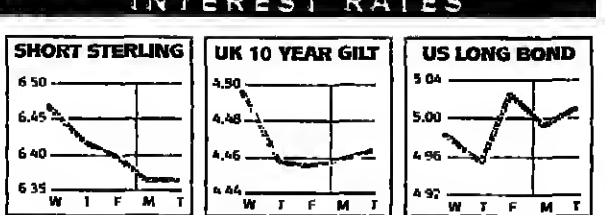
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STOCK MARKETS



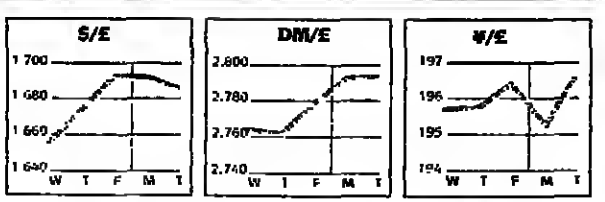
Index	Close	Change (%)	52 wk high	52 wk low	Yr Ago
FTSE 100	5557.10	-22.60	6183.70	4599.20	3.38
FTSE 250	4681.30	-25.20	5970.90	4247.60	4.94
FTSE 350	2627.60	6.70	2969.10	2210.40	3.62
FTSE All Share	2536.79	5.98	2886.52	2143.53	3.67
FTSE SmallCap	2005.50	-2.30	2793.80	1834.40	4.19
FTSE Fledgling	1120.00	-0.70	1517.10	1046.20	0.00
FTSE AIM	797.10	-3.20	1146.90	761.30	0.00
FTSE EBLDC 100	919.34	5.47	0.00	0.00	0.00
Dow Jones	14011.19	-100.43	17352.95	12797.90	1.05
Nikkei	14011.19	-100.43	17352.95	12797.90	1.05
Hang Seng	9952.04	1.30	11928.16	6544.79	3.13
Dax	4574.50	0.14	6217.83	3833.71	1.94

INTEREST RATES



Index	3 months	Yr chg	1 Year	Yr chg	10 Year	Yr chg	Long bond	Yr chg
UK	6.35	-1.35	5.69	-2.07	4.46	-1.80	4.36	-1.84
US	5.22	-0.69	4.97	-1.00	4.60	-0.50	5.01	-0.50
Japan	0.47	-0.28	0.53	-0.18	1.43	-0.46	2.17	-0.36
Germany	3.34	-0.41	3.20	-0.84	3.86	-1.43	4.72	-1.13

CURRENCIES



Index	at 5pm	Change	Yr Ago
Dollar	1.6852	-0.45c	1.6451
Q-Mark	2.7934	+0.76p	2.7473
Yen	196.60	+0.11	215.94
£ index	100.70	+0.20	102.40
\$ index	104.70	+0.50	108.50

OTHER INDICATORS

Index	at 5pm	Change	Yr Ago
Brent Oil (\$)	9.55	0.07	16.72
Gold (\$)	292.75	1.60	283.79
Silver (\$)	4.07	0.09	5.96

Source: Bloomberg.com/uk

TOURIST RATES

Country	Rate
Australia (\$)	2.6335
Austria (schillings)	19.07
Belgium (francs)	56.09
Canada (\$)	2.5353
Cyprus (pounds)	0.8019
Denmark (krone)	10.39
Finland (markka)	8.2703
France (francs)	9.1216
Germany (marks)	2.7291
Greece (drachma)	456.72
Hong Kong (\$)	12.68
Ireland (pounds)	1.0909
India (rupees)	64.54
Israel (shekels)	6.4767
Italy (lira)	2703
Japan (yen)	194.05
Malaysia (ringgits)	6.1497
Malta (lira)	0.6101
Mexican (nuevo peso)	15.26
Netherlands (guldens)	3.0599
New Zealand (\$)	3.1016
Norway (krone)	12.77
Portugal (escudos)	276.26
Saudi Arabia (rials)	6.1518
Singapore (\$)	2.6639
Spain (pesetas)	230.26
South Africa (rand)	9.8521
Sweden (krone)	13.27
Switzerland (francs)	2.2036
Thailand (bahts)	55.81
Turkey (liras)	49.5973
USA (\$)	1.6485

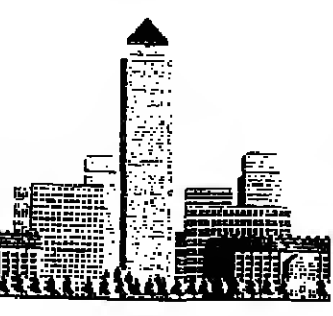
Source: Thomas Cook

Darling finds a workable solution

NEW LABOUR promised sweeping reform of pensions provision. The Maxwell affair, the scandal of pension mis-selling, the reduction in benefits for those contributing to Serps, the breaking of the link between the rise in average earnings and the basic state pension - all these contributed to a sense of national outrage over provision for the retired. It was one of the reasons why John Major lost the election.

As with many things, however, Labour entered government with no clearly defined policy on pensions, other than to do something about the whole wretched mess. Harriet Harman and Frank Field were instructed to conduct a pensions review, they consulted and consulted, argued and argued, and having failed to agree on anything, they were eventually fired.

Now Alistair Darling, the new social services secretary, has come up with what looks to be a rather sensible set of proposals on which the savings industry can be reasonably confident of delivering. True, these proposals stop a long way short of the root and branch reform of pensions provision promised while in opposition. Like Labour's reform of the welfare state, or what we've seen of



OUTLOOK

it so far at least, this is more a case of tinkering with the present system than revolutionising it.

But in the end, this may be no bad thing. There was always a major difficulty with introducing compulsion into saving for pensions - however it was dressed up, it would seem like a tax. The Government's alternative proposals for a stakeholder pension for middle income earners without other pension arrangements are commendably simple in composition, while the enhanced system of national insurance rebates ought to ensure the necessary incentive to save.

What's proposed is a savings product a bit like a PEP, a simple,

basic thing that everyone ought to be able to understand. The devil will be in the detail, of course, but on the face of it, there's something workable here.

By providing a second tier state pension for lower income earners, which in truth seems to be just a clever piece of housekeeping in that it will act as a substitute for the present system of income support, the Government faces up to the industry's reasonable insistence that it is just not possible economically to provide a stakeholder pension for those saving only very small amounts of money. Not a revolution, perhaps, but a very plausible stab at the problem.

Railtrack float

THERE ARE two small but vital words missing from yesterday's National Audit Office report into the privatisation of Railtrack. One is 'Clare', the other is 'Short'. Coming two-and-a-half years and a change of government after the original flotation in May 1996, the 83-page report may be thought of as largely irrelevant anyway. But what makes it a still more pointless

exercise is the NAO's failure to mention the seminal role the then shadow transport secretary played in making sure Railtrack was flogged off at a rock bottom price.

To recap, Railtrack was sold for an enterprise value, including debt, of £2.5bn and has since risen in value threefold to £7.7bn. The NAO chooses, however, not to rehearse Ms Short's role in ensuring the taxpayer was fleeced on such an epic scale. But it was there to read in black and white in the prospectus: "Dependent on availability of resources, and as priorities allow," wrote Ms Short, Labour would "seek by appropriate measures to extend public ownership and control over Railtrack".

Labour thought the statement would derail the privatisation. But all it did was convince a dying Conservative administration and its advisers that it was going to get Railtrack away before the next election. It had better sell it for a song. And if it was to have any hope of deterring Labour from carrying out Ms Short's renationalisation threat once in power it had better sell 100 per cent of the company rather than, say, 60 per cent.

Apart from a fleeting reference to concern about investor confidence

"in light of the forthcoming General Election", the NAO glosses over Ms Short's pivotal role. Bizarrely, it instead blames the failure to maximise proceeds on the decision not to sell Railtrack off in tranches. The NAO's back-of-a-fag-pack calculation is that had it been a phased sale, with the Government initially retaining a 40 per cent stake, the privatisation would have brought in an extra £1.5bn.

In comparison to its investigation into the sale of the rolling stock leasing companies (a rip-off on an even grander scale), the Railtrack report is a slipshod and feeble piece of work. But there is at least a silver lining. The NAO reckons a more realistic valuation for Railtrack should have been £4bn - compared to the £2.5bn the regulator, egged on by Labour, thinks it should be allowed to earn a return on. Perhaps it is just as well that Clare Short ensured it was undersold after all.

Pathe/Bollere

IT'S BEGINNING to seem quite like the City over there in Paris. For years the French business establishment has been controlled by a

closely knit elite of financiers, professional managers and bankers. Business has been as dirigiste as government. This cosy and protected world is supported by an interlocking structure of cross shareholdings and cascading capital structures, sometimes quite Byzantine in its complexity and obfuscation. Certainly it has seemed immune to outside interference; the idea of shareholder value is as alien to the French palate as a plate of fish and chips.

But perhaps not for much longer. In the past few years the soft underbelly of these structures has come in for persistent attack. Sometimes it has been Anglo-Saxon traders looking for value, at others it is the newer generation of French financiers not bound by the old ways. Here's another example of it.

Vincent Bollere is a Gallic Lord Hanson, whose acquisitions have transformed his cigarette making business into a \$1bn fuel and transport empire. Recently he abandoned his attempt to prize open the family-controlled construction group Bouygues. Now he is turning to Pathe, another family-led enterprise where he yesterday emerged as a 10.5 per cent shareholder.

Pathe has two main assets - a 12.7 per cent stake in BSKyB and 20 per cent of CanalSatellite, France's leading satellite pay-TV operator. Shares in Pathe trade at a big discount to the value of these two stakes alone. Take in the company's other media interests and there is plainly very substantial breakup value in Pathe not recognised in the share price.

This is not uncommon in French and other continental holding companies, but because they tend to be controlled by family or banking interests - in Pathe's case by Jerome Seydoux and his family - it is not easy to get at the hidden treasures. If you are part of a minority in a French company, you are likely to get legged over.

Mr Bollere, a business enemy of the Seydoux family, thinks he can help realise that value by forcing a sale of the Sky and CanalSatellite stakes. Even five years ago, this sort of shareholder value agitation was almost unheard of in France. Today it is becoming increasingly common. After the launch of the euro in the New Year, integrated European capital markets will become a reality and we are going to see a lot more of this sort of thing, right across the Continent.

News Analysis: The Green Paper offers providers great opportunities - and challenges

Review is no free lunch for pensions industry

AT FIRST glance, Labour's long-awaited proposals for pensions reform, unveiled yesterday, look like a dream come true for Britain's pension providers. If the suggestions contained in the pensions Green Paper become law, the 5 million people in Britain who at present have either a personal pension or access to an occupational scheme will be encouraged - via tax breaks - to take out new "stakeholder" pensions to be provided by the private sector.

The Government will, in effect, be introducing millions of new customers to banks, insurance companies and other providers. But there is no such thing as a free lunch, and yesterday's Green Paper contains several proposals designed to limit the profits pension providers can make from the new stakeholder pensions.

First, Alistair Darling, the Social Security Secretary, plans to cap fees for the new pension at between 0.5 per cent and 1 per cent - the current industry average is around 1.5 per cent. Perhaps surprisingly, this decision was broadly welcomed by the pensions industry, where many believe the proposed charging structure will help stimulate demand.

Rowan Gormley, chief executive of Virgin Direct, says: "People will start saving when they understand how pensions work and realise that they can no longer be ripped off."

Stephen Inglewood, head of group marketing at the pension company NPL, which has been heavily involved in advising the government on the pension review, adds: "The simplicity, flexibility and low costs of the new stakeholder pension, plus the built-in incentives, will make saving for retirement very popular among the public."

But the fee cap means that pension companies - particu-

larly the longer-established ones, which typically have higher cost bases - will have to improve efficiency to make money.

"The Government wants a simple product with very low charges," says Adrian Boulding, pensions strategy director at Legal & General. "It's down to us to operate and administer it in an efficient way."

Some of the proposals in the Green Paper go some way to helping pension providers get their costs down. The decision to scrap the State Earnings Related Pension Scheme (Serps), with its heavy administrative burden, will reduce operating cost. Not surprisingly, this was warmly welcomed by most in the industry.

"I am pleased and surprised

that the Government has bitten the bullet and decided to change Serps," says Jerry Barnfield, head of pensions strategy at CGU, the insurers.

The proposed collective structure of stakeholder pensions will help on the cost front. The idea is that potential customers do not approach pension companies on an individual basis, but instead go via their employer - who will

increased administrative burden - were less keen. The Government has made it clear, however, that it expects cost savings of this type to be passed on to customers.

Competition to provide the new pensions will also hurt margins. "Demand will be high from customers, but competition will be intense," says Mr Boulding. The market is already full of bursting with companies sell pensions, and over the past few years many non-traditional players have moved into pensions. The scramble to provide the best possible deal, combined with the improved transparency of the new scheme, will mean that high-cost providers lose out - good news for customers, but bad for the bottom line.

Then there is the problem of "cannibalisation" of existing savings vehicles. When the Government launched its pensions review a year ago, one of the industry's greatest concerns was that stakeholder pensions might be more attractive than existing pension arrangements, prompting extensive switching from personal or occupational schemes.

There was wide relief that yesterday's proposals did not harm company pension schemes: indeed, the Government emphasised that occupational schemes were the right answer for many people. However, the introduction of the stakeholder pensions could reduce demand for non-pension savings vehicles, TESSAs, PEPs, and so forth - and this could damage profitability.

"Stakeholder pensions will be the savings vehicle for many people going forward," says Mr Tompkins of PwC. "Tessas and PEPs were the vehicle of the late 1980s and early 1990s."

The new pension plans do represent a great opportunity for the pension companies, so it is hardly surprising that the plans were well-received by the industry. They give the companies access to millions of new customers - not only for stakeholder pensions but also, potentially, for a wide range of other financial products.

To make the most of this, though, the companies will have to work hard on their cost base and maintaining demand for existing savings vehicles. Only the most efficient and most imaginative will prosper in the brave new pension world.

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Rolls-Royce staff strike labour deal

THE WORKFORCE at Rolls-Royce Motor Cars yesterday agreed a Rover-style labour deal that guarantees their jobs in return for flexibility in working hours.

The company, which is owned by Volkswagen of Germany and has a workforce of 2,500, will adopt the new working time initiative in the new year. Under the scheme, employees will stay at home on full pay when demand is slack but work extra hours beyond the standard 37-hour week during peak periods.

Employees will be able to bank up to 300 hours a year in their "working time account". The new arrangements will virtually eliminate overtime working and premium payments at Rolls-Royce's Crewe plant in Cheshire, producing

cost savings for the company.

Rover's 37,000-strong workforce signed up to a similar deal last week but only after its German owner, BMW, threatened to close the Longbridge plant unless it received agreement to 2,500 job losses and cost savings of £150m a year.

In contrast to the crisis at Rover, Graham Morris, chief executive of Rolls-Royce, said: "This innovative arrangement has been concluded in a very 'Rolls-Royce way' - quietly, efficiently and without fuss."

A spokesman described the agreement as an insurance policy and stressed that Rolls-Royce did not expect the downturn it has experienced this year, with sales down 14 per cent, to continue into 1999.



School leavers are among key targets for the proposed low-cost 'stakeholder' pensions. Paul Hackett/Reuters

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COMPANY RESULTS						
Name	Turnover (£)	Pre-tax (£)	EPS	Dividend	Pay day	X-div
Bathurst (I)	259.7m (266.1m)	3.54m (3.10m)	-	-	-	-
Boulton (I)	7.37m (6.95m)	0.10m (0.12m)	0.20p (0.19p)	-	-	-
Computerland (I)	19.4m (10.30m)	0.50m (0.38m)	3.9p (5.7p)	0.80p (0.65p)	01.03.99	21.12.98
First Choice Holidays (F)	1.24m (1.02m)	2.2m (1.5m)	13.0p (13.7p)	2.2p (1.9p)	08.04.99	22.02.99
Fraser & Neave (F)	18.5m (15.3m)	26.5m (14.97m)	5.40p (3.36p)	-	-	-
Fraser & Neave (F)	106.31m (103.28m)	19.03m (18.74m)	3.85p (3.56p)	1.31p (1.08p)	15.02.99	11.01.99
Heaven (F)	48.86m (46.29m)	4.00m (2.053m)	3.9p (1.96p)	1.32p (1.32p)	06.04.99	01.03.99
Leeds Group (F)	73.55m (70.03m)	5.62m (7.45m)	10.3p (15.5p)	7.0p (7.0p)	27.01.99	21.12.98
NPI Furniture Group (I)	450.3m (475.5m)	8.8m (8.4m)	4.10p (4.0p)	0.7p (1.0p)	08.02.99	29.12.98
Norfolk (I)	22.24m (14.3m)	0.20m (0.25m)	4.10p (4.0p)	-	-	-
VFC (F)	2.37m (2.21m)	12.4m (10.7m)	10.8p (10.0p)	0.103p	01.03.99	21.12.98
Seagroup Group (F)	1.19m (1.24m)	63.5m (57.8m)	9.8p (7.7p)	1.90p (1.74p)	05.04.99	01.03.99
Van Hool (I)	2.12m (1.54m)	0.00m (0.10m)	0.78p (1.36p)	-	-	-
Villages (I)	23.57m (22.81m)	1.94m (2.33m)	1.0p (1.2p)	0.45p (0.40p)	07.05.99	21.12.98

Financial data table with columns: Fund, \$Bil, YTD, +/-%, TWR, Div, Yld, %P, Fund, \$Bil, YTD, +/-%, TWR, Div, Yld, %P. The table lists various investment funds and their performance metrics.

[illegible]

Emap's \$1.2bn US deal stirs investor fears

SHARES IN Emap lost almost 8 per cent of their value yesterday as the magazine publishing group launched a \$359m rights issue to help fund its \$1.2bn (£730m) acquisition of Petersen, the US magazine publisher.

The stock fall came a day after Emap admitted that it was in talks with Petersen, a special-interests magazine group whose titles include *Teen*, *Hot Rod* and *Guns & Ammo*.

Emap shares dropped 80p to 970p as investors took fright at the price of the deal and the rights issue, under which shareholders will be able to buy one new share at 875p for every five shares they own.

Kevin Hand, Emap chief executive, defended the company's decision to tap its shareholders for cash. "We wanted to give our other businesses sufficient headroom for expansion going forward," he said.

Mr Hand said Petersen was

BY PETER THAL LARSEN

a perfect fit for Emap. The company, which has headquarters in New York and Los Angeles, publishes a large range of special-interest magazines and has also started to run television and radio shows and Internet websites.

Mr Hand said Petersen provided Emap with a great opportunity to launch some of its popular journal titles in the US. The company has been looking for ways to start publishing *FHM*, its hugely successful men's magazine, for a US audience.

"Petersen have a structure and a network in place," he said. "They also have a database of 17 million males aged between 18 and 35, which is the market we want to reach."

Emap may also launch some of its other UK titles, such as *Smash Hits* or *Just Seventeen*, in the US.

It is not planning to bring any of Petersen's magazines to

the UK, although Mr Hand said the acquisition would bring valuable skills into Emap.

Emap first tried to buy the company three years ago when it was put up for sale by Ron Petersen, its founder, but was outbid by the current management team, which tabled a \$500m offer.

All the existing management are staying on board. Jim Dunning, Petersen's chairman and chief executive, will be joining Emap's board.

Analysts were concerned by the price given the lack of obvious synergies between the two companies. "It's a good strategic fit, but it looks very pricey," one specialist said. "Does it make sense just when advertising spending is slowing down?"

In the nine months to September, Petersen reported earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortisation of \$59.4m on revenues of \$229m.



Holidaymakers aren't deterred by slowdown, say First Choice chairman Ian Clubb (left) and managing director Peter Long Mark Chilvers

Rising bookings keep First Choice airborne

FEARS OF economic downturn have not deterred the British public from holidaying abroad, said Ian Clubb, chairman of First Choice Holidays.

"The travel industry has bucked the trend in retail, where decreasing consumer confidence has depressed demand. Holidays are a 'must

BY SIMON DUKE

have' rather than part of discretionary spending," said Mr Clubb yesterday.

Summer 1999 bookings are up 14 per cent on the same time last year, he said. Winter reservations are 6 per cent ahead.

First Choice, which reported a 59 per cent rise in full-year pre-tax profits before exceptional items to £35m, is applying a "cautious approach" to summer capacity, which it will cut by up to 5 per cent to avoid a repetition of 1995 when excess capacity led to huge discounting. The holiday industry has had a turbulent year since the Mon-

nopolies and Mergers Commission allowed tour operators to sell directly through their own distribution arms. The big four - Thomas Cook, Thomson, Air-tours and First Choice - scrambled to raise their shares of the high-street market.

First Choice, which bought the retail chains Baker's Dol-

phin and Intatravel in recent months, plans to treble the capacity of its 200-strong chain in the coming year, primarily through opening 20 "holiday hypermarkets" in retail parks. The acquisitions boosted First Choice's full-year pre-tax profits to £50m. The shares slipped 1p to 100p yesterday.

IN BRIEF

Procurement bill faces £12bn cut

THE GOVERNMENT is aiming to cut its £12bn procurement bill by at least £600m through a new efficiency drive. Peter Gershon, managing director of Marconi Electronic Systems, who has been brought in to conduct a three-month review of procedures, has written to chief executives and permanent secretaries across Whitehall seeking input as to how the efficiency savings can be made.

BBA buys US firm

SHARES IN BBA closed up 12.5p at 345p after the aviation to materials technology group agreed to buy US aviation services networks company AMR Combs for \$170m (£100.6m). The transaction would be on a debt-free, cash-free basis and satisfied in cash out of existing resources. The group said it expected the acquisition to enhance earnings in the first full year. "Quite simply it is a good deal," says Guy Hewitt, an engineering analyst at Charterhouse Tilney.

Scout link-up

FREEPAGES, the interactive services company, yesterday said it had joined up with Freeserve Internet, Dixons' subscription-free service. Freepages, which operates as Scout, said it was providing users with information on over 3 million businesses throughout the UK through a link on Freeserve. Its cinema guide will be integrated into the Freepage site.

Fund managers take refuge in safe havens

THE UK'S top fund managers have turned increasingly bearish on the economic outlook and are seeking refuge in defensive stocks, reveals a survey published by Merrill Lynch yesterday.

In its monthly poll of fund managers, the US bank found that in December only 6 per cent of Britain's leading institutions expected a stronger economy in 1999, down from 9 per cent a year ago.

The fund managers anticipate a year of sluggish growth, with the British economy set to expand by just 1 per cent in 1999 and by 1.8 per cent in 2000. The mounting gloom is pushing institutions towards companies whose earnings

BY FRANCESCO GUERRERA

are partially cushioned from the slowdown.

According to the survey, three-quarters of fund managers favour traditionally defensive "growth" stocks such as pharmaceuticals and utilities. A tiny minority are still keen on "cyclical" stocks, such as construction and high-street retailers, in the hope of a near-term recovery.

The City's pessimism was also reflected in fund managers' preference for UK gilts - a traditional safe-haven in difficult times - and their aversion to property.

However, institutions believe that the troubled state of

the economy will prompt the Bank of England to slash interest rates over the next 12 months: every fund manager polled by Merrill Lynch expected UK rates to fall in 1999.

On average, they believe that rates will touch 5.4 per cent by the end of next year, from the current 6.25 per cent. "Fund managers are defensive and are playing it safe," according to Trevor Greetham, Merrill Lynch's global analyst.

"They are saying that they expect cuts in base rates to feed through into a recovery in the year 2000. They expect the economy to bounce back, but it will be nothing to write home about," said Mr Greetham.

FSA lifts jobs freeze at Pru

THE PRUDENTIAL has been told it can recruit staff for its direct sales force again for the first time since it was reprimanded by the Securities and Investments Board last year over methods used by some staff to boost their commission income.

These included selling second pensions to existing customers - rather than encouraging them to top up existing pension plans - meaning they incurred an additional set of charges.

They also advised non-tax-paying clients to invest in a Prudential Savings Account when tax-exempt products would have been more suitable.

BY CLIFFORD GERMAN

A recruitment "freeze" was imposed in May 1997 after the insurance giant was ordered to test and where necessary retrain its direct sales force.

Management controls have been tightened, but one-third of the Pru's branch offices have been closed and the sales force has been run down from 5,500 to around 3,000.

A new remuneration package has also been introduced, which will provide sales staff with a basic salary worth at least 60 per cent of their total pay and reduce

their dependence on bonuses and commission income.

The Pru has now been given the go-ahead by the Financial Services Agency - which replaced the SIB - to resume recruitment. The company is advertising for staff but there are no plans to increase numbers significantly and total numbers are expected to fluctuate between 2,500 and 3,000.

Over 60 per cent of the Pru's sales are channelled through independent financial advisers, and this side of the business has grown by 70 per cent over the past year, partly due to its purchase of Scottish Amicable.

Upbeat Pearson bucks media trend

BY FRANCESCO GUERRERA

PEARSON, the Financial Times-to-Baywatch group, yesterday bucked the gloomy trend in the media sector with an upbeat trading statement.

Shares in the company soared more than 4.5 per cent to £11.10 after it reassured the City that it had not been hit by the problems plaguing some of its competitors and reiterated its target of double-digit earnings growth.

In its annual update, Pearson, which owns Penguin books and the recently-acquired US publisher Simon & Schuster, said that trading in the second half of the year was "in line with expectations".

Revenues and operating profits continued to grow during the period despite a multi-million pound investment in the Financial Times and the strength of sterling, the company said.

The announcement was greeted with relief by City analysts, who said they would retain their full-year profit forecast of around £350m. Industry experts had braced themselves for a bearish update following recent downturn

statements from a number of Pearson's rivals. Several publishing companies have been hit by a fall in advertising rates caused by the global economic slowdown.

Earlier this month, the Anglo-Dutch publishing giant Reed Elsevier issued a profit warning, while only last week the TV and newspaper group United News & Media predicted that earnings would fall short of market estimates.

"Pearson put out a robust statement. There was some nervousness around given that a number of rivals had said that everything was disastrous," said Louise Barton at Henderson Crosthwaite.

She added that Pearson had benefited from the radical restructuring and tight cost controls introduced by the chief executive Marjorie Scardino.

The company said that, despite a worsening economic climate, it had become less dependent on advertising revenues and "better placed to grow revenues and profits in these uncertain times".

NOTICE OF VARIATION OF INTEREST RATES

With effect from 16 December 1998 the following interest rates will apply on the savings accounts listed below.

60 DAY SAVINGS ACCOUNT	Previous Gross Rate p.a.	Previous AER** p.a.	New Gross Rate p.a.	New AER** p.a.	New Net Rate p.a.
(Interest paid annually)					
£50,000	6.80%	6.80%	6.25%	6.25%	5.00%
£25,000	6.55%	6.55%	6.00%	6.00%	4.80%
£10,000	6.20%	6.20%	5.65%	5.65%	4.52%
£5,000	5.75%	5.75%	5.20%	5.20%	4.16%
£500	5.20%	5.20%	4.65%	4.65%	3.72%
£1	5.00%	5.00%	4.45%	4.45%	3.56%

30 DAY SAVINGS ACCOUNT	Previous Gross Rate p.a.	Previous AER** p.a.	New Gross Rate p.a.	New AER** p.a.	New Net Rate p.a.
(Interest paid annually)					
£50,000	5.90%	5.90%	5.30%	5.30%	4.24%
£25,000	5.65%	5.65%	5.05%	5.05%	4.04%
£10,000	5.25%	5.25%	4.65%	4.65%	3.72%
£5,000	4.95%	4.95%	4.35%	4.35%	3.48%
£500	4.50%	4.50%	3.90%	3.90%	3.12%

30 DAY SAVINGS ACCOUNT	Previous Gross Rate p.a.	Previous AER** p.a.	New Gross Rate p.a.	New AER** p.a.	New Net Rate p.a.
(Interest paid monthly)					
£50,000	5.70%	5.85%	5.10%	5.22%	4.08%
£25,000	5.45%	5.59%	4.85%	4.96%	3.88%
£10,000	5.05%	5.17%	4.45%	4.56%	3.56%
£5,000	4.75%	4.85%	4.15%	4.23%	3.32%
£500	4.30%	4.39%	3.70%	3.76%	2.96%

INSTANT ACCESS SAVINGS ACCOUNT	Previous Gross Rate p.a.	Previous AER** p.a.	New Gross Rate p.a.	New AER** p.a.	New Net Rate p.a.
(Interest paid annually)					
£50,000	5.00%	5.00%	4.30%	4.30%	3.44%
£25,000	4.50%	4.50%	3.80%	3.80%	3.04%
£10,000	4.25%	4.25%	3.55%	3.55%	2.84%
£5,000	4.00%	4.00%	3.30%	3.30%	2.64%
£2,000	3.55%	3.55%	2.95%	2.95%	2.36%
£500	3.45%	3.45%	2.85%	2.85%	2.28%
£1	2.25%	2.25%	1.50%	1.50%	1.20%

TESSA 2	Previous Gross Rate p.a.	Previous AER** p.a.	New Gross Rate p.a.	New AER** p.a.	New Net Rate p.a.
£6,601	7.45%	6.63% ++	6.85%	6.13% ++	
£1	7.20%	6.63% ++	6.60%	6.13% ++	

GOLD DEPOSIT ACCOUNT	Previous Gross Rate p.a.	Previous AER** p.a.	New Gross Rate p.a.	New AER** p.a.	New Net Rate p.a.
(Interest paid annually)					
£50,000	3.05%	3.05%	2.45%	2.45%	1.96%
£25,000	2.90%	2.90%	2.30%	2.30%	1.84%
£10,000	2.65%	2.65%	2.05%	2.05%	1.64%
£5,000	2.25%	2.25%	1.65%	1.65%	1.32%
£2,000	2.00%	2.00%	1.40%	1.40%	1.12%
£500	1.70%	1.70%	1.20%	1.20%	0.96%
£1	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.40%

GOLD DEPOSIT ACCOUNT	Previous Gross Rate p.a.	Previous AER** p.a.	New Gross Rate p.a.	New AER** p.a.	New Net Rate p.a.
(Interest paid quarterly)					
£50,000	3.00%	3.03%	2.40%	2.42%	1.92%
£25,000	2.85%	2.88%	2.25%	2.27%	1.80%
£10,000	2.60%	2.63%	2.00%	2.02%	1.60%
£5,000	2.20%	2.22%	1.60%	1.61%	1.28%
£2,000	1.95%	1.96%	1.35%	1.36%	1.08%
£500	1.65%	1.66%	1.15%	1.15%	0.92%
£1	0.45%	0.45%	0.45%	0.45%	0.36%

RAINBOW SAVINGS	Previous Gross Rate p.a.	Previous AER** p.a.	New Gross Rate p.a.	New AER** p.a.	New Net Rate p.a.
(Interest paid annually)					
£50,000	5.00%	5.00%	4.50%	4.50%	3.60%

CASH CLUB	Previous Gross Rate p.a.	Previous AER** p.a.	New Gross Rate p.a.	New AER** p.a.	New Net Rate p.a.
(Interest paid quarterly)					
£50,000	5.00%	5.09%	4.50%	4.58%	3.60%

ROUTE 17	Previous Gross Rate p.a.	Previous AER** p.a.	New Gross Rate p.a.	New AER** p.a.	New Net Rate p.a.
(Interest paid quarterly)					
£50,000	5.00%	5.09%	4.50%	4.58%	3.60%

ACCOUNTS NO LONGER AVAILABLE TO NEW INVESTORS	Previous Gross Rate p.a.	Previous AER** p.a.	New Gross Rate p.a.	New AER** p.a.	New Net Rate p.a.
TESSA					
£50,000	5.60%	5.17% ++	5.10%	4.74% ++	

ROYAL REWARD	Previous Gross Rate p.a.	Previous AER** p.a.	New Gross Rate p.a.	New AER** p.a.	New Net Rate p.a.
(Interest paid annually)					
£100,000	5.40% +	3.40%	4.80% +	2.80%	3.84% +
£50,000	5.30% +	3.30%	4.70% +	2.70%	3.76% +
£25,000	5.05% +	3.05%	4.45% +	2.45%	3.56% +
£10,000	4.60% +	2.60%	4.00% +	2.00%	3.20% +
£5,000	4.35% +	2.35%	3.75% +	1.75%	3.00% +
£1	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.40%

ROYAL REWARD	Previous Gross Rate p.a.	Previous AER** p.a.	New Gross Rate p.a.	New AER** p.a.	New Net Rate p.a.
(Interest paid monthly)					
£100,000	5.25% +	3.30%	4.65% +	2.68%	3.72% +
£50,000	5.15% +	3.20%	4.55% +	2.58%	3.64% +
£25,000	4.90% +	2.94%	4.30% +	2.32%	3.44% +
£10,000	4.45% +	2.48%	3.85% +	1.87%	3.08% +
£5,000	4.20% +	2.22%	3.60% +	1.61%	2.88% +
£1	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.40%

The Royal Bank of Scotland

The Royal Bank of Scotland plc

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Interest rates and terms are correct at 16.12.98 and are variable. *Gross rate is the rate paid without the deduction of income tax to non tax paying customers. **Annual equivalent rate (AER) is a national rate which illustrates the gross interest rate (excluding any bonus interest payable) as if paid and compounded on an annual basis. + Rates include a 2.00% gross p.a. (£1.60% net p.a.) anniversary bonus which will be paid if no withdrawals are made during the 12 month period other than on the anniversary date and the balance does not fall below £5,000 ++ Interest is not compounded. The AER assumes that the maximum balance permitted by the Inland Revenue is deposited at the earliest opportunity (each year)

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Dailywin Group Limited

(Incorporated in Bermuda with limited liability under the companies Act 1981)

Placing and Open Offer of £3,807,552 nominal value of 9.5% Convertible Unsecured Loan Stock 2008 at £1 per Stock Unit.

Sponsored by W.H. Ireland Limited

Dailywin and its subsidiaries are engaged in the design, manufacture and assembly of watches and watch cases; trading of watch movements and components; and the retailing of watches in the People's Republic of China.

Listing particulars have been published by the Company and copies are available during normal business hours (Saturdays and Public Holidays excepted) for collection only from Company Announcements Office, London Stock Exchange, London EC2N 1HP, up to and including 18th December 1998.

Copies of the Listing Particulars are also available during normal business hours (excluding Saturdays and Public Holidays) up to and including 8th January 1999 from:

IFG Plc 15th Floor 100/102 High Road, Ilford, Essex, IG1 1NQ	Richards Butler, Solicitors, Beaufort House, 15 St. Botolph, London, EC3A 7EE	Richards Butler, Solicitors, 20th Floor, Alexandra House, 16/20 Charter Road, Hong Kong
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Hot gossip fails to warm up shares

DIAGEO, the wine and spirits giant, had a hungover look as worries grew that LVMH, the French luxury goods group, was planning another cut in its shareholding.

Bernard Arnault, the Paris-based financier who created the sprawling LVMH empire, has in the past sold off shares in the drinks behemoth to raise cash to develop LVMH. So confirmation that talks are going on which could lead to LVMH buying the Sanofi beauty business sent alarm bells ringing among Diageo followers.

The spirits group, taking in such brands as Johnnie Walker Scotch whisky and Smirnoff vodka, was formed by the merger of Grand Metropolitan and Guinness. LVMH once had 24 per cent of Guinness but its stake was reduced ahead of the merger, an event which did not please Mr Arnault.

LVMH now has 10.84 per cent of Diageo and Mr Arnault is a director of the spirits group. He would, no doubt, like to realise some of his involvement, particularly as the distribution and marketing association between Diageo and LVMH's Champagne and Cognac brandy

MARKET REPORT



DEREK PAIN

interests no longer needs the support of a shareholding.

Although well below their 778p high, Diageo's shares have held up relatively well. But the LVMH story swirling around them were the worst-performing Footsie constituent, falling 31.5p in busy trading to 615.5p.

Zeneca, the drugs group, provided the other hot story. In volatile trading the shares rose 73p to 2,587p, accompanied by stories that the proposed merger with Astra was about to be scuppered by a hos-

tile bid, possibly from Smith Klein Beecham. Doubts about the feasibility of the Anglo-Swedish merger have been growing and the market is clearly receptive to any suggestion of a counter-offer. SB, which has been involved in unsuccessful takeover talks with Glaxo Wellcome and American Home Products, rose 17p to 787p.

Merck, the US drugs group, is also thought to be unhappy about the alliance as its marketing link with Astra is a casualty of the deal. It is not expected to mount a bid but could attempt to unsettle the relationship. It is said to be likely to demand a high ransom for allowing its marketing link with Astra to unravel. Astra has an agreement to buy the Merck involvement in their joint venture in 2001, but any merger by the Swedes before then could require heavy compensation.

Tarmac, after the surprise collapse of its deal with Aggregate Industries, fell 12.25p to 101.75p. Aggregate lost 2.25p to 68.75p.

Elsewhere on the merger front, Sears gained 6.5p to 259p on high-street entrepreneur Philip Green's conditional offer. Newcastle Utd's

mystery suitor left the shares 6.5p down at 98.5p.

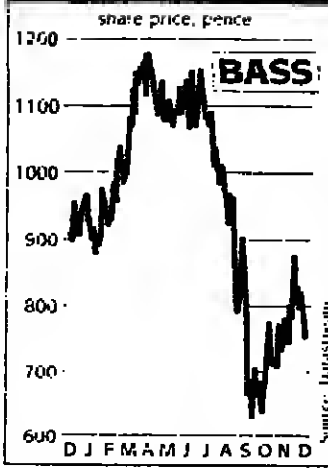
Footsie, after a struggle, ended with a 22.6-point gain at 5,557.1, with telecoms constituents contributing most of it. Supporting shares re-

SHIELD DIAGNOSTIC, raising £2.3m through an institutional placing at 470p, appears to have upset one big shareholder. A trade of 149,000 shares went through at 468p a few hours after the call was known. The shares were sold at 25p, even 30p, below the then price. One suggestion was that an institution took exception to the placing because it understood that Shield would not need more cash. The shares ended at 510p.

mained under pressure, and government stocks moved ahead.

Drink and restaurant shares gave ground as worries about Christmas spending cast a shadow. Bass slumped 34.5p to 735p. Pearson, the banking and media

SHARE SPOTLIGHT



group, recovered from Monday's weakness as the signalled trading statement was more positive than expected. The shares rose 48p to 1,110p. Pearson's comments helped Reuters, 17p higher to 540.5p, and Reed International, 12.25p to 425p.

Telecoms rejoiced from the relatively lenient mobile phones review. Vodafone topped the Footsie leader board with a 42p gain to 945p.

Orange rose 25p to 638p and BT 21p to 881p. Even Cable & Wireless, on the hunt for a new chief, managed a 13.5p gain to 706.5p.

House of Fraser, the department store chain, was unveiled.

ACORN, a high-yield fund, is being launched to capitalise on the slump in small company shares, which have underperformed by 40 per cent in two years. With many tiddlers offering high-dividend yields Acorn, to be quoted in London and Guernsey, will specialise in shares such as Leeds, the textile group, now offering a return of around 16 per cent. Peter Webb and John McCullough of Eagle investment group will be Acorn's advisors.

tumbling 2.5p to 53.5p, a new low. The market was unsettled by stories that the group is having a particularly disappointing Christmas. Marks & Spencer was another casualty of the festive shopping malaise, off 12p to 396.25p. The MFI

furniture chain, despite a 28m half-time loss, rallied 4p to 30p.

Alpha Airports rose 4p to 49.5p on talk that the Harrods stake is about to change hands. Lopex, the marketing group, gained 6p to 47p as Incepta, the City public relations group, lifted its stake to 26.9 per cent. Southwind, a company run by Incepta chairman Bob Morton, has just over 3 per cent.

Healthcare group Oxford Biomedica added a further 1p to 13p following its genes link with Rhône-Poulenc Rorer Reunin, the miner softened 5p to 42.5p after announcing a £500,000 placing with institutional investors. They are being offered shares at 50.5p.

Rumours that Premier Oil plans a write-down of its exploration and production assets knocked the shares 2p to 17p. Cox Insurance was the day's worst performer, slumping 45 per cent to 186.5p after a profits warning. Analysts now expect year's figures of around £17m, down from the earlier £28m.

SEAQ VOLUME: 806.9 million
SEAQ TRADES: 63,764
GILTS INDEX: 115.16 +0.82

Investment: Furniture retailer hopes a radical restructure will lift its prospects

MFI posts £26m half-year loss

BY NIGEL COPE
Associate City Editor

MFI, the struggling furniture retailer, yesterday cut its dividend and announced that the costs of a radical re-structuring programme had pushed the group into a £26m loss at the half year stage.

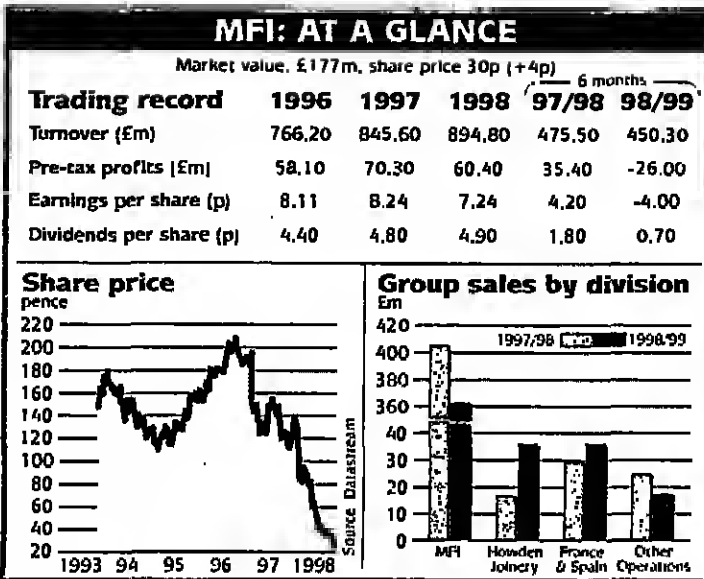
The losses were higher than most expectations due to the inclusion of a £12m property provision on a warehouse that is now surplus to requirements. Total exceptional charges were £35m.

MFI's chief executive John Randall said the shake-up would be "substantially complete" by the time the stores start their winter sale on Boxing Day and would lead to annual cost savings of £25m a year.

The re-structure, announced in July, has included 1,500 job cuts and the stripping out of 7,000 product lines such as textiles and household products to concentrate exclusively on kitchens and bedrooms.

It has also closed its in-store warehouses and will service customers via home delivery from 12 regional depots instead.

However, analysts have criticised the strategy saying the attempt to re-invent MFI risked alienating existing customers. The stores could



lose shoppers who wish to take home items on the day of purchase. The City is also concerned that by stripping out 50 many product lines, MFI will suffer reduced footfall.

"There is some business we must be prepared to lose," Mr Randall said. "But our message will be clear. Customers will know exactly what we are selling and how it is available."

MFI recognises the weakness of its brand name but plans to invest more marketing power behind its kitchen names such as Hygena and Schreiber. "I'm not denying there are people for whom the MFI name is a turn-off, but there is no quick fix for that," Mr Randall said.

One of MFI's problems is that consumer spending has been weakening rapidly in its core kitchen and



John Randall: Shake-up will be complete by Boxing Day

bedroom sectors, leading to a 10.6 per cent fall in UK sales.

Although its market share is constant at 27 per cent, the whole market is down by 9-10 per cent over the year. The second problem is that powerful competitors are increasing their focus on kitchens. Ikea is expanding its presence as is B&Q, particularly with its larger Warehouse format.

A third issue is that as part of its strategy of expanding its exposure to kitchens and bedrooms, MFI is trying to capture a larger share of more upmarket, added-value purchases. This will take the company into competition with smaller, niche operators that are likely to offer higher levels of service.

"MFI's brand positioning is seen as mass market and it is going to be very difficult to change that. Maybe they should stick to what they are good at," one analyst said.

However, other sector specialists said that radical action was essential. "If you strip out the profits of the manufacturing business and take acreage of the property benefit from freehold stores, the retailing operations are losing a packet," one said.

MFI shares, which stood at more than 200p in 1996, rose 4p to 30p yesterday, just above their all-time low. Mr Randall said there had been no expression of interest about a possible bid and analysts said a bid was unlikely.

"The manufacturing business would put off a lot of buyers so the share price is likely to stay where it is," said another analyst. "If anything it will go lower. The management's track record is not that good - they have kept changing their minds."

Bid for Sears revives those 1980s feelings

THE TEAM advising Philip Green on his "will he, won't he" bid for Sears brings back some interesting memories of the 1980s.

The corporate finance team at Rea Brothers, the investment bank working for Mr Green, includes William Tebbit, son of Lord Tebbit, former Tory minister and Chingford bruiser. Lord Tebbit also happens to be a non-executive director of Sears.

So, I ask, has Tebbit Junior discussed the bid with Tebbit Senior? "Of course not," replies William Tebbit. Yes, but isn't it difficult avoiding the subject? "It's easy when you live 60 miles apart," he says.

Tebbit Junior is a director at Rea Brothers, while the head of corporate finance is Nicholas Wells - one of the former 1980s whizz kids who fell foul of the Blue Arrow affair.

Mr Wells resigned from BZW in 1989 after being heavily criticised in the DTI report into the fiasco. Earlier he worked for County NatWest (when NatWest still had an investment banking side) and helped mastermind the £37m rights issue for Blue Arrow to fund the acquisition of Manpower. County claimed the issue had been a success, when it hadn't.

Mr Wells was acquitted of fraud in 1992 by the Court of Appeal. He was and remains highly respected within the Square Mile. After he left BZW some thought he might follow his strong religious leanings and devote himself full time to the Church, but in 1996 he reappeared as a director at Rea Brothers.

PEOPLE AND BUSINESS BY JOHN WILLCOCK

THE BANK of England may have shut down most of its regional offices in the past few years in a fit of cost-cutting zeal, but it still likes to keep in touch with the common folk out in the provinces (whatever people in the North-east might think).

The Bank retains a team of a dozen agents scattered around the UK who advise the bods in Threadneedle Street on economic conditions in the country at large. When the Monetary Policy Committee meets to decide on interest rates, for instance, it will use the agents' evidence in its musings.

Yesterday the Bank appointed two new agents - Chris Brown for the East Midlands and Mark Pratt for Yorkshire and the Humber.

Both have worked for the Bank for more than 20 years. Mr Brown lists his hobbies as "DIY, caravanning, and anything to do with boats", while Mr Pratt is into "hill walking and easy cycling".

Plenty of opportunities to meet "the people" there.

when he was still in short trousers, presumably - he was a director of NatWest Equity Partners and managing director of JD Wetherspoon.

ONE OF the more affable figures in the world of retail banking, Sir Brian Pearce, has been appointed chairman of the Centre for the Study of Financial Innovation, the third person to hold the post. Sir Pearce was finance director of Barclays from 1987 to 1991 when the Bank of England parachuted him into the hot seat at Midland. Coincidentally, one of his predecessors as chief executive of the Midland, Sir Kim McMahon, was also the CSM's first chairman.

People and Business welcomes any contributions. Please send e-mails to indymbusiness@independent.co.uk.

Gellnet holds key to Securicor NFC prepares to brake as UK slowdown looms

SECURICOR, the security and distribution group, disappointed the City with results at the low end of expectations and downbeat comments about the economic outlook.

The results offered few new clues to the important issue for Securicor's stock market value: when, and at what price, it will sell its 40 per cent shareholding in mobile phone group Celnnet.

Shares in Securicor fell by 3p to 477.5p as the company reported flagging consumer confidence. Resulted in volumes of parcel deliveries in its distribution division - which has a large exposure to high-street retailers - being lower than the company had expected.

"It seems that Christmas has been postponed this year," said Chris Shirlcliffe, Securicor's finance director.

Overall, pre-tax profits for the 12 months to September jumped to £83.5m from £31.4m the previous

BY PETER THAL LARSEN

year, when Securicor profits were dented by a number of one-off items.

The figures showed large swings in the company's different divisions. Profits in the security business jumped by 34 per cent to £33.5m as price competition eased and investment in information technology systems paid off.

But profits in the distribution division fell to £24.3m from £28.8m, reflecting the justification for its £200m joint venture with Deutsche Post, the German postal group, which was announced last month.

In Securicor's communications division losses widened to £21.6m, reflecting the investment in Intek, the US private radio network operator. The group is planning to sink another £25m into Intek in the coming year, most of it to pay for the radio spectrum which the company won in the recent radio auction in the US.

Mr Shirlcliffe confidently predicted that the communications division would turn a profit in 2000.

Nevertheless, Celnnet remains the key. Booming share prices for mobile phone stocks have helped to propel Securicor shares into the FTSE 100 earlier this year. Analysts estimate that, at current valuations, Securicor's 40 per cent stake is worth as much as £3bn.

However, the question is whether British Telecom will pay the market price for the stake. Other analysts believe that the agreement between the two shareholders means that Securicor cannot sell its stake without first offering it to BT. The issue is set to hot up this year as BT decides whether to use Celnnet as its vehicle to bid for a licence to operate a third-generation mobile network.

"BT is simply not going to over-pay for Celnnet," one observer said. "Meanwhile, the profit forecasts just keep coming down."

NFC, the transport and logistics group, yesterday became the latest company to warn that the slowdown in the economy will hit its business in the new year.

The owner of Allied Pickfords removals and Exel Logistics said that weakness in several markets would put the brakes on its UK operations.

Gerry Murphy, the chief executive, said NFC's outsourcing activities would suffer from the slump in manufacturing, with automotive and chemicals operations particularly affected. The downturn in the housing market would squeeze Pickfords' personal moving business.

Mr Murphy said NFC was partly insulated from economic vagaries as around one-third of its logistics contracts were long-term. However, the rest were tied to client performance and would reduce earnings if the economy deteriorated.

BY FRANCESCO GUERRERA

The bearish statement triggered profit downgrades for 1999 from about £114m to £108m. The shares fell 3p to 117p. The news overshadowed 1998 results in line with expectations: pre-tax profit rose 9 per cent to £126.1m on turnover down 3 per cent to £2.3bn.

Analysts noted that the company was vulnerable to a UK slump as Britain accounts for over 60 per cent of earnings, and strong growth in US business would not be enough to offset a UK slowdown. NFC's troubled European operations are only expected to break even in 1999.

Peter Bergius at ABN Amro rates the shares, trading on 10 times 1999 earnings, a hold. Other experts concede that NFC is in good shape to weather a downturn after restructuring, but say there is little upside for the shares.

FOREIGN EXCHANGE RATES									
Country	Sterling Spot	1 month	3 months	Dollar Spot	1 month	3 months	D-Mark Spot	1 month	3 months
Australia	1.0000	2.7012	2.6973	0.5935	0.5941	0.5950	0.3580	0.3580	0.3580
Belgium	36.208	36.208	36.208	1.3662	1.3662	1.3662	0.3580	0.3580	0.3580
Canada	0.7145	0.7145	0.7145	1.3662	1.3662	1.3662	0.3580	0.3580	0.3580
Denmark	0.1365	0.1365	0.1365	1.3662	1.3662	1.3662	0.3580	0.3580	0.3580
ECU	1.4933	1.4933	1.4933	1.3662	1.3662	1.3662	0.3580	0.3580	0.3580
Finland	0.0064	0.0064	0.0064	1.3662	1.3662	1.3662	0.3580	0.3580	0.3580
France	6.5596	6.5596	6.5596	1.3662	1.3662	1.3662	0.3580	0.3580	0.3580
Germany	2.7934	2.7934	2.7934	1.3662	1.3662	1.3662	0.3580	0.3580	0.3580
Greece	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	1.3662	1.3662	1.3662	0.3580	0.3580	0.3580
Hong Kong	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	1.3662	1.3662	1.3662	0.3580	0.3580	0.3580
Italy	1.3662	1.3662	1.3662	1.3662	1.3662	1.3662	0.3580	0.3580	0.3580
Japan	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	1.3662	1.3662	1.3662	0.3580	0.3580	0.3580
Malaysia	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	1.3662	1.3662	1.3662	0.3580	0.3580	0.3580
Mexico	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	1.3662	1.3662	1.3662	0.3580	0.3580	0.3580
Netherlands	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	1.3662	1.3662	1.3662	0.3580	0.3580	0.3580
New Zealand	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	1.3662	1.3662	1.3662	0.3580	0.3580	0.3580
Norway	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	1.3662	1.3662	1.3662	0.3580	0.3580	0.3580
Portugal	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	1.3662	1.3662	1.3662	0.3580	0.3580	0.3580
Saudi Arabia	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	1.3662	1.3662	1.3662	0.3580	0.3580	0.3580
Singapore	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	1.3662	1.3662	1.3662	0.3580	0.3580	0.3580
South Africa	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	1.3662	1.3662	1.3662	0.3580	0.3580	0.3580
Spain	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	1.3662	1.3662	1.3662	0.3580	0.3580	0.3580
Sweden	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	1.3662	1.3662	1.3662	0.3580	0.3580	0.3580
Switzerland	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	1.3662	1.3662	1.3662	0.3580	0.3580	0.3580
US	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	1.3662	1.3662	1.3662	0.3580	0.3580	0.3580

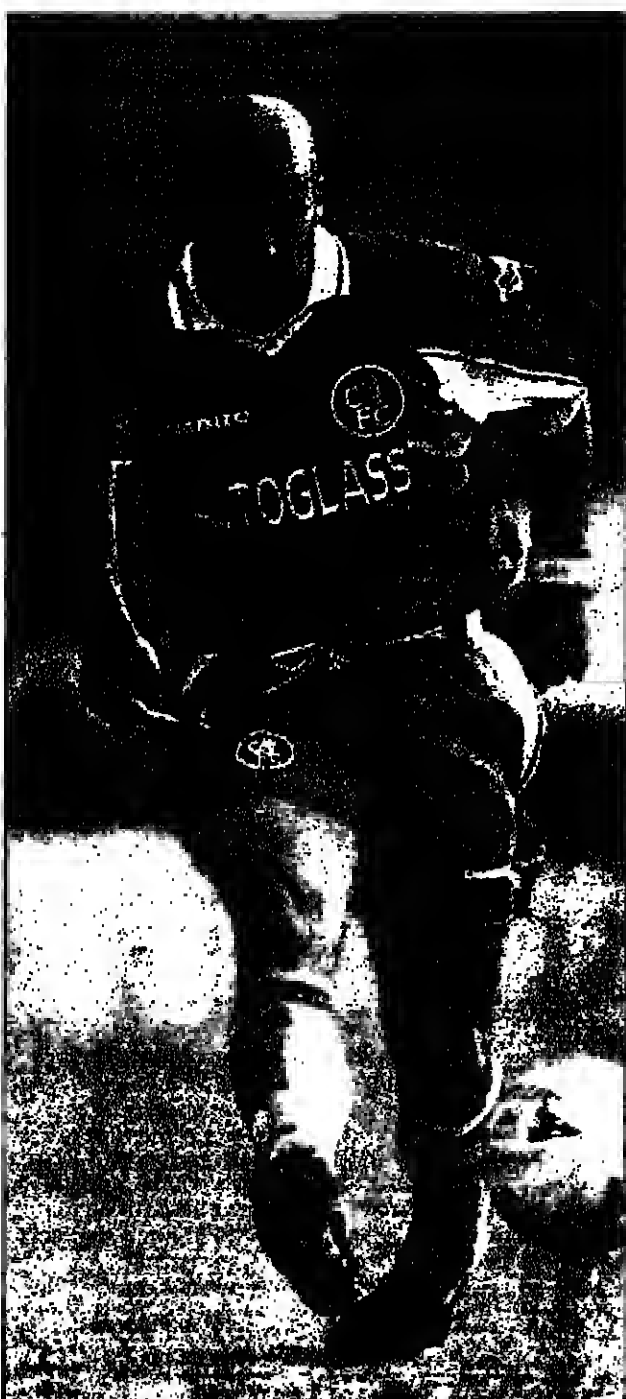
INTEREST RATES									
UK	Germany	US	Japan	France	Belgium	Italy	Spain	Sweden	Switzerland
6.25%	Discount	4.50%	Prime	4.50%	Discount	2.75%	Discount	3.00%	Discount
3.00%	Discount	4.50%	Prime	4.50%	Discount	2.75%	Discount	3.00%	Discount
3.00%	Discount	4.50%	Prime	4.50%	Discount	2.75%	Discount	3.00%	Discount
3.00%	Discount	4.50%	Prime	4.50%	Discount	2.75%	Discount	3.00%	Discount

LIFFE FINANCIAL FUTURES									
Contract		Settlement		High	Low	Est. floor volume			
Long Gilt	Dec-98	118.61	118.70	118.50	190.00				
5 Yr Gilt	Dec-98	109.83	109.85	109.85	3.00				
German Bund	Mar-99	115.89	---	---	---				
Italian Bond	Mar-99	113.69	113.61	113.68	5767.00				
Japan Govt Bd	Dec-98	134.54	134.54	134.40	1041.00				
3 Mth Sterling	Dec-98	93.63	93.65	93.62	21261.00				
3 Mth Eurodollar	Jan-99	96.86	96.80	96.80	28000.00				
3 Mth Eurodollar	Feb-99	96.85	---	---	---				
3 Mth Eurodollar	Mar-99	96.89	96.89	96.87	48500.00				
3 Mth Eurodollar	Apr-99	96.89	96.89	96.97	160000.00				
3 Mth Eurodollar	May-99	99.42	---	---	---				
3 Mon Eurodollar	Jan-99	96.83	98.61	98.50	9425.00				
3 Mth Euro	Mar-99	98.44	98.51	98.42	1894.00				
3 Mth Euro	Jan-99	96.80	---	---	---				
3 Mth Euro	Feb-99	96.85	---	---	---				
FTSE 100	Dec-98	5547.00	5560.00	5513.00	42370.00				

LIFFE 100 INDEX OPTION									
Settlement Price: 5557.10									
Series	Call	Imp Vol	Put	Imp Vol	Jan	Call	Put	Feb	Call
5500	63	28	65	34	214	193	308	304	368
5550	40	28	93	34	186	215	309	309	355
5600	23	28	127	30	130	140	271	311	327
5650	12	27	168	38	140	270	249	373	305

SPORT

Special reserves: Manchester United and Chelsea, who meet at Old Trafford tonight, have quality cover in all areas



I'll be your substitute, whenever you want me: (left to right) Chelsea strikers Gianfranco Zola and Gianluca Vialli, the Chelsea player-manager, and Manchester United midfielders Roy Keane and Nicky Butt

Allsport/Emphas

Race to keep up with flying squads

ASTON VILLA are the Premiership leaders and Arsenal the defending champions, in a better position than they were 12 months ago, but those shrewd chaps who lay the odds are in no doubt that tonight's meeting of Manchester United and Chelsea brings together the two teams most likely to win the title next May. Leading bookmakers offer United at nothing better than even money, with Chelsea at 5-2; Arsenal and Villa can both be backed at 6-1, though there has been no rush to bite off the hand that writes the book.

Among all the relevant factors, a deeply significant one appears to be the strength in depth that this evening's contestants can offer. As Graham Sharpe, of William Hill, puts it: "It's clearly influencing punters that should each of the clubs have two or three crucial injuries, United and Chelsea are going to be in a better position to bring in comparable replacements."

While Alex Ferguson and Gianluca Vialli have at their disposal a dozen experienced internationals waiting in the wings, the understudies available to Arsène Wenger and

BY STEVE TONGUE

John Gregory are not of that quality. They need to be, if only because these days they are far more likely to be called upon. In 1981, Villa won the championship using only 14 players; last season Arsenal needed 26.

Reserves can no longer be fading seniors or raw juniors joggling along in the Football Combination or the Central League, and waiting with varying degrees of patience for one of the regulars to collect an injury. Once five substitutes were introduced for League

games, and seven for European competition (and how long before that becomes 11, as in the World Cup?) they became important members of a squad.

The need for depth in that squad was particularly felt by United and Chelsea four seasons ago, when each struggled in Europe because of regulations restricting the number of non-Englishmen. The formidable squads that the respective clubs have subsequently built up could be said to date from having to leave out Peter Schmeichel from a Champions' League game in Barcelona

(United lost 4-0) and being forced to use Graham Rix, aged almost 37, in the Cup-Winners' Cup.

Vialli, in particular, has emphasised that he no longer believes in the concept of a "first team", rather in a group with largely equal (and high) ability, so that "somebody coming in can do as good a job as the person resting". That Continental notion is gaining ground, especially among clubs with greater commitments than just the Premiership. Ferguson, having pioneered the idea of fielding a completely different team in an irrelevant competi-

tion like the League Cup, said last week that he will allow his key players matches off between now and the European Cup games in March, at a time when more than half of the other quarter-finalists are refreshed by an official winter break.

Even those who prefer the British notion of finding a best side and sticking to it have to acknowledge the need for replacements due to injuries and the vastly increased number of suspensions. Next season, with the Champions' League expanded to 32 clubs, that need will be greater than ever.

So it could be argued that on any given match day, the strength of a club can best be gauged by looking along the line of substitutes sitting by the dug-out. At Chelsea or United, as the lists below show, that line is often sufficiently impressive to put opponents at a psychological disadvantage from the start. How many times have managers of lesser clubs been heard to say: "I looked at their subs' bench and it was frightening"? United's will certainly be the only one with three England squad members on it (Phil Neville, Nicky Butt and Teddy Sheringham), plus a couple of

Scandinavian or Dutch internationals as well. The Chelsea "second XI" listed would give most Premiership teams a decent game and beat a high proportion of them.

When Arsenal attempted to match their reserves against Chelsea's in a Worthington Cup tie recently, they received a nasty shock, now commemorated by T-shirts on sale in Fulham Broadway, with the figures 5-0 writ large. There is some young talent in the Arsenal shadow squad - as there needs to be, since some of the seniors are on borrowed time - and after they had

achieved a typically defiant win away to Panathinaikos last week, Wenger could not resist claiming: "We have young players who are better than many people thought. The nucleus of the next generation is there." But the next generation was of no help in other Champions' League matches, when the first team was so badly depleted.

Villa, to be fair, started their development some way behind the other three clubs, their prime concern when Gregory took over 10 short months ago being to stay out of the Nationwide League. The new manager quickly recognised the need to strengthen his squad and in buying Dion Dublin, Paul Merson, Alan Thompson and Steve Watson has improved not only his first-choice team, but given a more formidable look to his subs' bench too.

Other clubs are belatedly following suit, some - Blackburn, Leeds, Tottenham and Liverpool for instance - finding there is more money available to them than there is quality in the marketplace. In the meantime, few are betting against United and Chelsea.

STRENGTH IN DEPTH: THE UNTOUCHABLES AND THEIR UNDERSTUDIES

MANCHESTER UTD		CHELSEA		ARSENAL		ASTON VILLA	
1st XI	2nd XI	1st XI	2nd XI	1st XI	2nd XI	1st XI	2nd XI
1 Peter Schmeichel	17 Ral van der Gouw	1 Ed de Goey	23 Dimitri Kharin	1 David Seaman	13 Alex Manning	1 Mark Bosnich	13 Michael Oakes
2 Wes Brown	31 John Curtis	17 Albert Ferrer	2 Dan Petrescu	2 Lee Dixon	7 Nelson Vivas	6 Steve Watson	2 Gary Charles
3 Jaap Stam	21 Henning Berg	5 Frank Leboeuf	12 Michael Duberry	14 Martin Keown	5 Steve Bould	15 Gareth Barry	20 Riccardo Scimeca
4 Gary Neville	4 David May	6 Marcel Desailly	21 Bernard Lambourde	6 Tony Adams	20 Matthew Upson	4 Gareth Southgate	18 Fabio Ferraresi
5 Denis Irwin	5 Ronny Johnsen	14 Graeme Le Saux	29 Andy Myers	3 Nigel Winterburn	22 David Grondin	5 Ugo Ehiogu	23 David Hughes
7 David Beckham	15 Jesper Blomqvist	16 Roberto di Matteo	7 Bjarne Goldbaek	15 Ray Parlour	19 René Gardé	3 Alan Wright	8 Mark Draper
16 Roy Keane	8 Nicky Butt	11 Dennis Wise	24 Eddie Newton	17 Emmanuel Petit	29 Paolo Vernazza	17 Lee Hendrie	11 Alan Thompson
18 Paul Scholes	12 Phil Neville	8 Gustavo Poyet	28 Jody Morris	4 Patrick Vieira	16 Stephen Hughes	7 Ian Taylor	16 Simon Grayson
11 Ryan Giggs	14 Jordi Cruyff	3 Celestine Babayaro	22 Mark Nicholas	10 Marc Overmars	8 Fredrik Ljungberg	10 Paul Merson	21 Darren Bayfield
9 Andy Cole	20 Ole Gunnar Solskjaer	10 Pierluigi Casiraghi	9 Gianluca Vialli	11 Dennis Bergkamp	12 Christopher Wreh	9 Stan Collymore	13 Julian Joachim
19 Dwight Yorke	10 Teddy Sheringham	25 Gianfranco Zola	19 Tore Andre Flo	9 Nicolas Anelka	21 Luis Boa Morte	14 Dion Dublin	22 Darius Vassell

Yorke fit as United reach for the stars Sexton praises the new Chelsea

DWIGHT YORKE should be fit to return for Manchester United as they bid to go back to the top of the Premiership against Chelsea at Old Trafford tonight. To do so they must overcome the Chelsea jinx - the visitors have lost on only two of their last 23 visits. Indeed, United have won only one of their last nine home encounters with Chelsea.

The record books show that Chelsea have registered 10 victories and 11 draws in those 23 matches, including two wins and three draws in the five games since their last defeat - a 3-1 reverse in April 1993.

However, Chelsea face the ultimate test of their resurgence in what should prove a defining game in the title contest.

Chelsea are in fine form having recorded seven wins and eight draws in the league since they lost to Coventry on the opening day of the season, so Yorke's recovery is great news for the Manchester United manager, Alex Ferguson.

BY DAVID ANDERSON

Yorke, who has been in outstanding form for United since his August move from Aston Villa and has scored 12 goals in 20 appearances, missed his first match last Saturday when a thigh strain ruled him out of the 2-2 draw at Tottenham.

Ferguson said yesterday: "Dwight Yorke got a bit of a knock against Bayern Munich last week so we left him out on Saturday. Denis Irwin missed the game and Paul Scholes had a little bit of flu, but they are all fit and I have had a full squad to train with."

"The only one who missed training was Jaap Stam, who had a little bit of a shin injury, but he will be OK. All I have to do is pick the right team."

Ole Gunnar Solskjaer is likely to be the striker to make way for Yorke even though he scored both United goals against Tottenham.

Ferguson said of tonight's game: "There's a good chance for us to go top and it's going

to be a terrific match against Chelsea. They have been in very good form this year and they have got a consistency about them which maybe Chelsea teams have lacked in the past."

Chelsea, who currently occupy fourth place, will be without their influential defender Franck Leboeuf due to suspension.

Chelsea's rotation policy was again widely criticised at the weekend when the manager, Gianluca Vialli, made six changes to his starting line-up and Derby secured a late equaliser.

However, it means that Desailly, Albert Ferrer, Roberto Di Matteo and Celestine Babayaro, as well as Vialli, will have benefited from the extra recuperation time.

The critics should also consider that United employ a similar policy and dropped two points late on at Tottenham after leaving out Irwin, Scholes, Yorke and Andy Cole from their starting line-up.

Babayaro said: "Several of

the players got rested for the Derby game including myself, so I'm feeling fresh."

The United game is vital because everybody knows what they are capable of doing and show that Chelsea are a team that everyone has to be scared of."

Chelsea's improved consistency this season makes them serious title contenders - apart from Coventry their only other defeat came in the Worthington Cup quarter-final at Wimbledon.

However, Chelsea will want to forget the crushing 5-3 defeat by United in the FA Cup third round at Stamford Bridge last January.

United were simply devastating as they cruised into a 5-0 lead before conceding three late goals, and the result was a hammer blow to Chelsea's morale and they did well to recover and win the Coca-Cola Cup and the Cup-Winners' Cup.

Babayaro admitted that the

FA Cup result had a big effect on the team, who were also beaten 1-0 in the Premiership by United at Stamford Bridge in February.

However, the Nigerian international missed both of those games through injury and is determined to fulfil a personal goal in tonight's fixture. He said: "It will be a big day for me because United have been a team that I have always dreamed of playing against, so I'm looking forward to it."

It promises to be a fascinating contest between two teams with in-form strikers and question marks still remaining over their defences, and there is a ferocious central midfield battle in prospect between Dennis Wise and Roy Keane.

Titles are never won in December, but if Chelsea can emerge from their two games against United this month with their growing reputation untarnished they will at last have earned the right to be taken seriously.

Sexton's most memorable Old Trafford win came in August

1968 when Chelsea overwhelmed the then European champions. "They had George Best and the rest of them playing, but we won 4-0," he said.

Chelsea are emerging as genuine title contenders and have not lost in the Premiership since the opening day of the season - to Coventry.

Sexton is impressed by how their manager, Gianluca Vialli, has carried on the work of Ron Gullit, now with Newcastle. He believes they have finally found the right consistency.

"If you are going to do well in the League you have to be consistent, and Chelsea have found that. They have silenced a few of their critics with this long unbeaten run."

"What they need to do now is to win more games and to keep scoring regularly if they want to be serious about winning. Despite their record at Old Trafford, though, it will still be very daunting for them."

THE FORMER Chelsea and Manchester United manager, Dave Sexton, who had four wins and three draws from his seven trips to Old Trafford with the London club, feels playing at the stadium suits their style.

He believes Chelsea's attacking approach is one reason for their good record. "Traditionally, Old Trafford has been a happy hunting ground for Chelsea," he said.

"I don't know why, but it could be that Chelsea have always had a good attack. Also, everyone raises their game for matches at Old Trafford because it's a bit like going to Wembley. It lifts players and makes them more determined to excel," Sexton said.

"I think Chelsea, despite all their ups and downs, have always had the type of players who relish the opportunity of playing on a great stage."

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Ashes fiasco: Former chairman attacks falling standards as tourists prove they are products of second-class system

England are 'awful' says Illingworth

RAY ILLINGWORTH yesterday launched a stinging attack on England's Ashes flops after yesterday's third Test defeat in Adelaide.

Illingworth, a former chairman of selectors who also led England to Ashes success as captain in 1970, suggested that too much was being spent on the team for too little reward.

Illingworth said: "It was awful - I can't say any more than that. I am glad I am out of it. I think we got it wrong with the side we put out by playing four bowlers in 40-50 degree heat. But you can pull apart every department in the team.

"For me, what has to be looked at is the money spent on the team. We have more coaches, managers, physios and even more hangers-on than ever, but the results are just as bad. What depresses me most is not the fact that England lose in Australia, but that they are lying down and dying. We are getting blown away."

Illingworth is at least encouraged that the first-class counties have grasped the nettle of two divisions in the championship for 2000 but fears the

By CHRIS SHAW

innovation is being established 24 years too late.

"The problem goes right through the game. At league level, standards are not as good as they were 20 years ago and nowhere near as good as they were 30 years ago."

But the England and Wales Cricket Board chief executive, Tim Lamb, warned against a mood of doom and gloom, stressing that cricket's hierarchy had been putting forward radical proposals to improve the state of the Test side.

"We can't turn things round overnight," he said. "Australia have a culture of excellence at school, grade and state level. They are the top team in the world and we should never forget they are a very fine, very talented side."

"Of course we want to raise the standard of cricket here and there is a unity of purpose throughout the whole game. But I don't want to be a hostage to fortune. It will take time."

The chairman of selectors, David Graveney, believes England's failed Ashes campaign

began to hit problems in the first Test after the Australians were let off the hook. Alan Mullally's failure to run out Steve Waugh on the first day of the series is now seen as a turning point by Graveney.

"Nobody does that on purpose but there is no point in fudging the issue. Mistakes have been made and a team like Australia will punish you if you make them," Graveney said.

"We have to show character in the final Tests and the one-day matches and put the recent disappointments behind us."

"It is hard enough losing, but losing to Australia for an English cricketer is a particularly galling experience. It is the job of management to pick the players up," he added.

English cricket should take a cool and calm view according to the chairman of the England and Wales Cricket Board, Lord MacLaurin.

"It is unfortunate and we are very disappointed, particularly after the series against South Africa last summer, but there will be no call from us for any resignations," he said.

"It is just one of those things. It could be said we were slightly unfortunate to lose the loss in Adelaide but we have to face the facts that we have underperformed at national level for quite a few years."

"If you have something that has not been good for a while, you have to take it apart and put it together again."

The Sports Minister, Tony Banks, also reacted phlegmatically, saying, "It is important to do well at sport but remember it is only a sport that we are talking about, it is not as if someone has declared war on us."

Meanwhile, England have the worst tail in the world. According to the ratings released yesterday by PricewaterhouseCoopers, England are bottom of the nine Test-playing nations on 288 points, compared with South Africa, whose No 8-11 batsmen are top with 1,058 points.

The ineptitude of England's bowlers is also put into perspective by the fact that Australia's tail-enders are only eighth in the list on 395 points. The former Sussex and Australian Test player Tony Dodds will take over as MCC's head of cricket in February, having been MCC marketing manager for five years.



Mark Ramprakash is bowled by Damien Fleming for 57 during England's second innings collapse in Adelaide yesterday

Allsport

Laughing stock of the world

IT IS the system of English cricket which must stand convicted quite as much as its inadequate representatives in Australia. If it had not been for that storm in Brisbane, England would now be three matches down. As it is, they are two down with the Ashes firmly in Australia's keeping and with nowhere to hide.

It has, in all honesty, been embarrassing to watch England struggle so desperately even to compete with Australia over the last month. The batsmen have all shown - except John Crawley, whose present plight is too awful for words - that the art of batting is not completely dead in England.

Mark Ramprakash has fought bravely throughout and now badly needs another hundred to add to the one he scored in Barbados last March. The only hundred so far has been made by Mark Butcher in Brisbane, but now he is again as badly out of sorts as he was

at the start of the tour. The others have all dipped into the 40s and 50s and 60s.

They have done the hard work, but just as they have been starting to play pretty well, they have got themselves out. Batsmen who, at other times, have found it easy enough to go on to a hundred and beyond, have suddenly forgotten how to do it any longer.

This is a reflection of two things. First, Australia are a most formidable side: there are no weak links, they are captured most capably and, man for man, appear far tougher and more battle-hardened than England. They also have a remarkable self-belief which is called confidence and is the second factor.

Australia are used to winning. England are not. Their recent victory over South Africa, which owed a huge amount to questionable umpiring, has been shown up for what it was. Some of the gloss was im-



HENRY BLOFELD
IN ADELAIDE

mediately removed from it by the wallowing England were given by Sri Lanka. Now it can be seen as a mirage.

England have fallen back all too easily into the habit of losing and are playing the untidy cricket which is almost always the hallmark of sides which have no confidence and therefore no self-belief. It is the classic Catch-22 situation because a side needs confidence

to start winning and to start winning to gain confidence.

Sadly, there do not seem to be the individuals capable of producing a match-winning performance on their own which would lift the side and change the gloomy course of this series. Nasser Hussain might just play this sort of innings, and in the bowling department Alex Tudor has as much of a chance as anyone - if he can get another game. How England should regret not playing him at the Adelaide Oval.

When the pressure is on, England cannot handle it, which the coach, David Lloyd, apparently regarded as an unforgivably negative question when asked the other night why this might be so. If those in authority are not prepared to face up to the real world, one wonders how things will ever get better.

Pious hopes for the future are all very well, but this Eng-

land tour of Australia has gone past this point. The embarrassing truth is that the Australian public, to say nothing of the hundreds of England supporters out here, have been badly let down, not to say insulted, by the cricket England have been playing.

Ian Chappell wrote the other day that England were no longer worth a five-match series in Australia and, on this evidence, it is impossible to argue. Twelve thousand miles away in England, it may not be so easy to realise the laughing stock that English cricket has become in Australia, and that is even before seeing the absurd efforts of England's tail-enders trying to play out even one single over.

On this last day at the Adelaide Oval, I found myself wondering if I would ever again see England win back the Ashes. The gulf between England and Australia cricket has become that large.

THE ASHES: ANATOMY OF FAILURE

England have gone 11 years and five series since Mike Gatting last returned from Australia having led them to an Ashes victory. Below are all the encounters since:

Date	Venue	Result
Jan '87	Sydney	Aus won by 55 runs
Jan '88	Sydney	Drawn
Jun '89	Headingley	Aus won by 210 runs
Jun '89	Lord's	Aus won by 6 wickets
Jul '89	Edgbaston	Drawn
Jul '89	Old Trafford	Aus won by 9 wickets
Aug '89	Trent Bridge	Aus won by 180 runs
Aug '89	The Oval	Drawn
Nov '90	Brisbane	Aus won by 10 wickets
Dec '90	Melbourne	Aus won by 8 wickets
Jan '91	Sydney	Drawn
Jan '91	Adelaide	Drawn
Feb '91	Perth	Aus won by 9 wickets
Jun '93	Old Trafford	Aus won by 179 runs
Jun '93	Lord's	Aus won by 62 runs
Jul '93	Trent Bridge	Drawn
Jul '93	Headingley	Aus won by 148 runs
Aug '93	Edgbaston	Aus won by 8 wickets
Aug '93	The Oval	Eng won by 161 runs
Nov '94	Brisbane	Aus won by 184 runs
Dec '94	Melbourne	Aus won by 295 runs
Jan '95	Sydney	Drawn
Jan '95	Adelaide	Eng won by 106 runs
Feb '95	Perth	Eng won by 329 runs
Jun '97	Edgbaston	Eng won by 9 wickets
Jun '97	Lord's	Drawn
Jul '97	Old Trafford	Aus won by 268 runs
Jul '97	Headingley	Aus won by 61 runs
Aug '97	Trent Bridge	Aus won by 264 runs
Aug '97	The Oval	Eng won by 19 runs
Nov '98	Brisbane	Drawn
Nov '98	Perth	Aus won by 7 wickets
Dec '98	Adelaide	Aus won by 205 runs

Total record: P33 W4 D9 L20

Australia innovate as their old adversary disintegrates

"MAYBE WE should call it now," says the Sydney Morning Herald, its cricket writers deprived - again - of the opportunity to report on a meaningful Ashes Test on their home ground. "Let our blokes hit the beaches, let their hokes go home for Chrissy." Until England can field a radically improved side, "the Ashes should be reduced to three Tests, so at least there could only be one dead match, maximum."

It is an extreme view, but many a media head here has been shaken sadly at the red state of their old adversary. Not all of it sentimental, of course - Channel Nine doing its utmost to sell the Ashes as the summer's top sporting spectacle, has strained the ingenuity of its promotions department as the remaining prospect of a genuine contest fizzled out.

For the Perth Test, the on-air trail featured a row of Barney Army foot-soldiers, complete with Union Jack boxer shorts, cheering on their team only to be silenced as a row of Aussies inserted a cricket ball in each rashly opened mouth. By the build-up to Adelaide, however, the draw card of competition had given way to spectacle - this was bound to be the scene of "some great batting," the voice-over promised, after the "fast bowler's wicket" of the West.

Unlike the last Ashes series here, Australia has seen enough to be convinced of the English players' commitment.

After another Ashes defeat, England's commitment to sport is now being doubted. By Jake Lynch in Sydney

"The Poms are trying," The Australian said. "They train with effort and enthusiasm." It is England's cricketing commitment that is in doubt. "Something serious must be done or soccer will squeeze it into a curious but largely irrelevant sideshow," the paper warned.

A lack of commitment to sport is not a charge anyone could level at Australia. Just as Alec Stewart was musing in Adelaide on the relative improvement of the rest of the cricketing world, so local researchers were releasing the findings of a study measuring just how far that commitment goes. The University of South Australia reckon taxpayers here have shelled out as much as Aus\$50m - about £18m - for each gold medal won by their sports stars at the last five Olympic Games.

One of the best home prospects for gold at the Sydney Olympiad in the year 2000, the 400 metre athlete Cathy Freeman, developed her talent at the Victoria Institute of Sport in Melbourne. Generously state-funded, it also boasts a highly impressive squad of young cricketers, developed with great attention to detail during their one or two-year scholarships.

The VIS cricket coach, Neil Buszard, has the budget to experiment with new innovations like, for instance, a two-way radio system which allows touchline coaching during practice games. On one end, a small receiver is hooked on to the batsman's waistband with an earpiece taped to his neck. On the other, the coach can offer advice on particular flaws, or encouragement when he sees something good, as it happens.

Buszard and his colleagues have even set up transmitters working on the same principle to monitor the batsman's heart rate during a match situation, so he can put them through extra drills to reproduce the same level of bodily activity when his young charges are practising in the nets. He told the Independent: "The beauty is that we're not just standing still, and expecting cricket to stay where it was 10 years ago. We're trying to take it into the next millennium." Unless England are very careful, by the time they have caught up, the Aussies will have moved further on.

Sheltering from one of Melbourne's seasonal downpours, Buszard lobs practice balls to his most promising young pupil, the Australia Under-19 talent Michael Klinger. "There's very tough competi-

tion, especially as there's only six batting club spots up for grabs in the whole of Australia," Klinger says. "Whatever you can do to get an advantage over the next guy, that's the key. Working hard on your fitness, skill, training four or five times a week."

The structure of the game here, with State sides vying for the highly competitive Sheffield Shield offering a middle tier of ability between Test and English county level, has manifold advantages. The sincerest English tribute to their all-conquering hosts is the ECB's belated embrace of a divisional structure, with the strongest teams no longer guaranteed easy fixtures against the weakest, to go with its own gleaming new academy.

The restricted number of opportunities at the higher levels, with the academy structure, certainly leads to an emphasis on technique in developing the best young players, not necessarily winning every game as they make their way up. "We teach the process. Get the process right, and hopefully, along the way, that win will come," Buszard says.

Along the way for England, the Prime Minister's XI at Canberra, then Saturday's four-day against an Australian XI at Hobart. The line-up for that game supports Klinger's observations about the competition for places, with batsmen Darroo Lehmann and Greg Blewett among those with Test experience hoping to impress



Damien Fleming (left), Cofin Miller and Glenn McGrath celebrate victory Reuters

Warne to delay Ashes comeback

SHANE WARNE looks increasingly unlikely to play in the fourth Ashes Test against England in Melbourne on 26 December because he does not feel he will be back at his best.

"The Boxing Day aim might have been unrealistic," the leg-spinner said following Australia's victory in the Adelaide Test that kept the Ashes Down Under for the sixth successive occasion. Melbourne had been Warne's aim but he has struggled in his three Sheffield Shield appearances since returning from shoulder surgery, managing just six wickets.

In his last game for Victoria, against Queensland, Warne took one wicket and was disappointed with his second innings performance in particular. He has another Shield match, against New South Wales on Saturday, in which he can press his claims for a recall.

Warne also said he is ready to appear in front of a Pakistan inquiry into match-fixing if requested to by the Australian Cricket Board. "That's probably the way to go," Warne said yesterday. "I think the thing that has most disappointed me is the link between what we did and

match-fixing, which is two completely separate issues." Warne and Mark Waugh admitted taking money from a bookmaker to provide pitch and weather information during Australia's 1994 tour of Sri Lanka.

But Mark Taylor, the Australia captain, said Waugh and Warne are unlikely to give evidence. "I will be very surprised if they go, after what happened in Pakistan last time," Taylor said. "When Mark Waugh and I were summoned to the court [during Australia's Pakistan tour in October] we were given various assurances that did not happen."

W Indies go from 'disaster to disaster'

THE MANAGER of the West Indies, Clive Lloyd, claimed injuries, illness and attitude problems are to blame for the tourists' dismal showings in South Africa.

After seven matches on their tour, the West Indies have yet to register a win, even in one-day games against invitation teams, and trail South Africa 2-0 in the five-Test series.

Lloyd, who captained the West Indies during their most successful era in the 1970s and 1980s, said: "We seem to be stumbling from one disaster to another."

He said the injuries to key players Jimmy Adams and Dinanath Ramnarine and the glandular fever which affected opening batsman Philo Wallace had also been big blows.

"We are disappointed," Lloyd admitted in Durban yesterday. "We have to try to rectify the situation." Lloyd said the disasters had started with the threatened strike by players which delayed the beginning of the tour. "We didn't start right. We have had problems with injuries and illness and our batsmen have not shown the right sort of attitude," he said.

The West Indies play a Natal XI in an Asian township outside Durban, in a one-day game today, and a four-day match against South Africa A in Pietermaritzburg starting on Saturday. The third Test starts in Durban on Boxing Day.

Football: Former bank clerk who became game's most powerful administrator lost touch with the grassroots

Kelly's sad error of judgement

ON ANY given Saturday, Graham Kelly is as likely to be found standing behind the goal at a non-League ground as he is to be seen in the directors' box of a Premier League club. Still an enthusiastic centre-forward, he is, in his own way, as much a football man as the Fergusons, Grams and Dalglishes.

But, somewhere along his route from Blackpool bank clerk to the most powerful administrator in the game, Kelly appears to have lost touch with those grass-roots. In allowing Keith Wiseman to involve him in this ludicrous votes-for-cash scheme, he has committed a fundamental error of judgement. The only redeeming feature of this squalid affair is that, unlike the FA's arrogant and bumptious chairman, Kelly has had the humility to realise this and fall on his sword.

This is no surprise. Though his public image is that of "Kelly the Jelly", the stumbling television performances hide a sharp mind and engaging personality. He once memorably responded to being crowned, by the fanzine, *When Saturday Comes*, as "the man who has done most damage to football" by turning up to collect the award in a dinner-jacket and reeling off a Dickie Attentive-style acceptance speech.

However, the bumbling manner also hid an ambition which was revealed when he jumped ship from the Football League to the FA and promptly oversaw the emasculation of the former by linking the FA with the major clubs to create the Premier League. Having done this he failed to control the clubs, allowed them to push him into a larger league than envisaged, and to ignore much of the "Blueprint for Change" which was supposed to accompany the new structure. The conse-

BY GLENN MOORE

quence has been a steady increase in the gap between the top clubs and the rump which sits uneasily with the FA's duty to foster the whole of the game.

His supporters will point to the (belated) overhaul in the coaching structure, the more pro-active and media-minded administration, and the enormous increase in revenue. His detractors say that that is part of the problem - that the FA has become more interested in commercial activity than football activity.

It was Kelly's head for figures which first brought him into the game, in 1968. His playing career having stalled at the level of Blackpool's third team, for whom he kept goal, he had moved into banking with Barclays when the job of accounts assistant came up at Football League headquarters in nearby Lytham St Annes. Kelly rose to become secretary, the top job, in 1979 before moving to the FA 10 years later.

The Hillsborough tragedy was his first appearance in the spotlight; he did not handle it well and an image was formed. Despite losing weight, swapping his bouffant look for a sleeker gelled hairstyle, and sharper clothes, he has never truly lost it.

This led to his being a popular scapegoat and symbol of the FA's perceived lethargy when he was one of the leading proponents of change. The bureaucracy did need streamlining but the danger of concentrating power in the hands of the executive is that you are dependent on the quality of the few individuals concerned.

This is where Wiseman comes in. A compromise candidate on his election in the summer of 1996, he moved

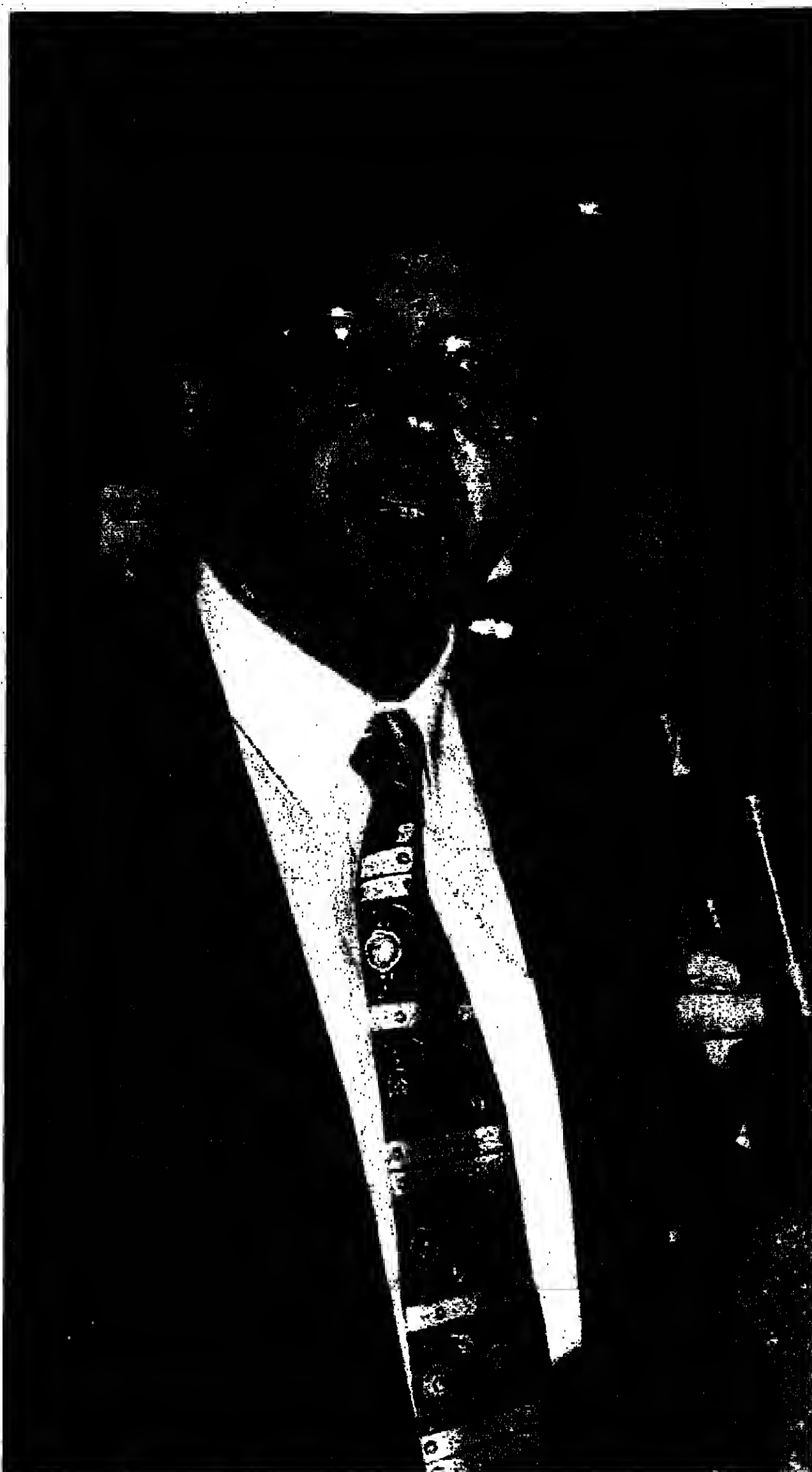
quickly to ally himself with Kelly. However, his position was further weakened by the revelation that he had made a paper fortune from the sale of Southampton and his failed attempt to make his position a salaried one - at £75,000 pa. His unsuccessful attempt to get on to the Uefa Committee further dented his stature and the cumulative effect was that, instead of strengthening Wiseman's position by linking himself with Kelly, it fatally weakened the latter's.

The FA has now been plunged into crisis, with the position made worse by Wiseman's intransigence. Though David Davies, who has taken executive control, said the World Cup 2006 bid would not be affected, there would have been champagne and cheers at the German and South African headquarters yesterday. Quite apart from the obvious jibe that, if they cannot run themselves how can they run a World Cup, the bid has now lost Kelly's contacts and will be, however unfairly, tarnished by association with the whiff of corruption about this affair.

Davies, a good choice as temporary chief executive and a candidate for the job full-time, also said Glenn Hoddle's position as England manager would be unaffected. Maybe, maybe not. Wiseman and Kelly were two of Hoddle's biggest supporters and he is not thought to be as close to Davies as might be suspected from their collaboration on Hoddle's diary. That book, incidentally, did not help either Kelly or Wiseman and may hinder Davies if he seeks the top job.

Kelly is unlikely to spend long in the wilderness: one suspects his organisational skills and contacts will earn him another job soon enough, either on the board of a club or another administrative body. He may even try and organise a takeover at Blackpool, whose financial distress has pained him, even if the irony that this is partly due to the rise of the Premier League he created may have escaped him.

Nothing has marked his decade at the helm as much as the contrast between his departure and Wiseman's resistance. For all his faults, the FA could ill afford to lose Kelly. If it fails to get rid of Wiseman the folly will be compounded.



Graham Kelly, the Football Association's chief executive, who resigned yesterday

Victor Crawshaw

Hoddle's position is secure, says FA

BY MARK BRADLEY

THE POSITION of the England coach, Glenn Hoddle, will not be affected by the crisis within the leadership of the game's governing body, the Football Association have insisted.

Hoddle has been informed of the resignation of the FA chief executive, Graham Kelly, and the vote of no confidence passed in the chairman, Keith Wiseman, by the FA's executive committee yesterday.

The England coach is employed by the FA, and Kelly and Wiseman have been two of his greatest supporters during the months of criticism which Hoddle recently endured.

However, the FA's director of public affairs, David Davies, who is now temporary executive director, maintained: "I will be discussing the situation with Glenn Hoddle but it is not something that immediately affects him."

The Football Association of Wales president, John Hughes, last night said there was "nothing sinister" in the FA's offer of financial help.

Hughes has only been involved in negotiations for the last 18 months, talks which were started by a former president Brian Fear, who stepped down in line with FAW policy, which sees a new president appointed every three years.

Hughes said: "All that money was earmarked to go to charity and the Welsh football trust to help promote and develop our youth and women's football in Wales."

"There was nothing sinister in it and it certainly had nothing to do with the senior side."

"Whatever has been done has been with the full knowledge of the FAW council. I passed on the resolution to them and they voted on it."

"What has happened has upset me and I am quite shocked at the news of Graham's resignation because he is a great friend. The FA has lost a good man."

"I've a lot of admiration for the work he has done at the FA and his work which has seen him devote a lot of his time to Uefa and Fifa."

Commenting on last night's developments, the Sports Minister, Tony Banks, said in a statement: "It is a matter of great sadness to hear of events at the FA. However, it is for the internal workings of the FA to resolve the current situation."

"In the meantime the Government expresses its satisfaction with the stated determination of the FA to pursue with all vigour England's 2006 World Cup bid, which is fully supported by the Government."

David Mellor, head of the Government's Football Task Force, has called for a radical overhaul of the game's administration following Kelly's resignation.

Mellor believes Wiseman should also go, even though he has refused to resign in spite of a unanimous vote of no confidence.

"On a personal level I'm very sorry about this," he said. "I like Graham Kelly, and he worked hard to make the existing structure of football administration work well in this country."

"But what has happened today, plus all the other problems that have either been mishandled or not handled by the FA, must surely make everyone who cares about the game aware that there will have to be a massive shake-up in the way football is administered."

"We can't go on like this, and it will obviously be part of the remit of the Task Force to discuss the issue as to whether or not an independent regulator for football is needed."

"What seems to me to be clear is that finding a replacement for Graham Kelly and one must presume Keith Wiseman, since his position is surely untenable, is merely papering over the cracks."

"There is no alternative to fundamental change. What is needed is a proper administration for football that is appropriate to a modern high-profile, financially driven game."

"I think it's not only Keith Wiseman and Graham Kelly who will end up going, a lot of the elderly gentlemen in the blue blazers also need to consider their positions."

"The case for change is irresistible."

THE GRAHAM KELLY FILE

- 1 Graham Kelly worked in a bank until the age of 22, when he joined the accounts department of the Football League.
- 2 Kelly was assistant to the legendary League secretary Alan Hardaker, a man he described as "a cross between Napoleon and Genghis Khan on a bad day".
- 3 Kelly moved to the Football Association in February 1988, just nine weeks

before the Hillsborough disaster, which he witnessed and later described as "horrendous".

4 Kelly was once a goalkeeper, who was told by Emyr Hughes, the former Liverpool and England defender: "You'll always be a banker."

5 Kelly has played as a centre-forward for the FA's staff side, otherwise known as "Kelly's Heroes".

Fifa given deadline to prevent 2002 boycott

ASIAN FOOTBALL executives yesterday gave football's ruling body, Fifa, until March to avert a regional boycott of the 2002 World Cup in Japan and South Korea by giving the continent the chance of an extra berth in the finals.

After emergency talks in Bangkok, the Asian Football Confederation said it was willing to sacrifice one qualifying place because of Fifa's decision to choose two co-hosts.

But the AFC said there would be a boycott - with Japan and South Korea exempted - if Fifa refused to give the third-placed Asian qualifier the chance to play-off against the

BY MICHAEL BATTYE

top team from Oceania. "All spoke in favour of a boycott," Peter Velappan, the AFC general secretary, said.

If Asia's team won a play-off, they would have five places in the finals instead of the four, including two for the co-hosts, that Fifa proposed earlier this month.

"You must understand that this is a very reasonable request," Velappan said. "Let us maintain the status quo, which is three and a half, and from this we are willing to sacrifice one for the hosts, which is two and a half."

"So therefore what we are now asking is to restore the half seat that has been taken away from us."

But he said the 2002 finals would go ahead, no matter what the outcome of the dispute between the AFC and Fifa over the world body's decision on 4 December to effectively reduce 44 Asian nations to contesting two places in the finals.

"We will honour the responsibility of hosting the World Cup in 2002 in Japan and Korea," Velappan said. "Japan and South Korea will play. That is definite."

The two hosts qualify automatically for the finals, so when

Fifa decided Asia should have four places, including the host slots, Asia were outraged. At this year's World Cup, Asia had three guaranteed places, and earned another when Iran beat Australia in a play-off.

Velappan and other delegates said the 16 nations which met yesterday were unanimous, including Japan, about the boycott threat.

The South Korean representative was not present at the crisis meeting and World Cup organisers and officials in Seoul declined to comment.

Japanese delegate Tadao Okada confirmed he had backed it. "Yes, we are mem-

bers of the AFC and we will co-operate with AFC decisions and actions. The AFC has to remain its rights."

The delegates to the Bangkok meeting all said they agreed Fifa's stance was unfair. "Asia has one third of the world's population. We have 46 members in Fifa, one quarter of the total. If you want a World Cup without one third of the world's population properly represented, it's unfair," said Manilal Fernando of Sri Lanka.

Velappan said the AFC would write immediately to the Fifa president, Sepp Blatter, explaining yesterday's decision and send a six-member dele-

gation to Zurich to try to persuade him of the seriousness of the Asian position.

"We wish to inform him not to push us to take this drastic decision," he said. Asia last boycotted the World Cup 32 years ago over a similar dispute, although North Korea ignored that boycott.

"The Fifa executive committee meets in March and we demand the 4 December decision is rescinded. If the March decision is not in our favour, the AFC executive committee will meet again to take the appropriate decision," Velappan said.

"Blatter must resolve the issue or he will push us to the very edge," said Fernando.

Syrian delegate Farouk Bouzo said Asia was suffering from the decision to have co-hosts.

"Co-hosting was a Fifa decision, not one by the AFC, and you know what Fifa politics are like," he said. "We should not pay at the expense of their politics."

Australia were particularly upset by Fifa's decision because it said the Oceania winners, usually Australia, would have to play off against the fifth-placed South American side instead of an Asian team.

Australia have yet to beat a leading South American country.

McNamara ready for training Withe's Thai triumph

THE CELTIC midfielder Jackie McNamara will set his sights on an Old Firm comeback after receiving the green light to resume training this week. The Scotland international has been sidelined for the past month with a recurrence of the knee problem that troubled him for much of last season.

"His knee is so much better today, and he can hopefully go into training within the next day or so," said the Parkhead physio, Brian Scott.

Scott added that "there was no reason" why McNamara should not be ready for the traditional New Year clash with Rangers on 3 January.

Before that, the Scottish champions - currently trailing their city rivals by seven points - could have Marc Rieper avail-

able again for Saturday's visit of Dunfermline. The Danish defender has suffered no reaction on his return to training at the end of last week following ankle surgery.

However, Craig Burley's comeback plans have been put on hold with the Scotland midfielder now suffering from a recurring back problem despite shaking off the groin injury that initially forced him out six weeks ago.

Aston Villa are reaping the rewards of their success on the pitch with a record-breaking financial upturn. The Midlands club generated £500,000 in gate receipts from each of the sell-out home fixtures with Liverpool, Manchester United and Arsenal in the past three weeks. In addition, corporate

hospitality, commercial ventures and sponsorship have brought in record amounts as businessmen look to jump aboard the bandwagon.

Villa are also set to double the normal sales of their mini-season tickets for the second half of the campaign - and that will bring in another £300,000. The Aston Villa commercial manager, Abdul Rashid, said: "It seems to be the return of the glory, glory days at Villa Park, and there is a real feel-good factor among the players, the management - and now the fans."

"This recent run of games we have had has been a record-breaking spell in terms of the finance generated for the club from all areas. There have been good spells in the

club's past history on the pitch - but we are doing as well as we ever could on the financial side." Villa's home Premiership encounter with Sheffield Wednesday on 28 December is expected to be another sell-out.

The French World Cup striker Christophe Dugarry could return to Italy to play for Juventus despite a previous unhappy spell in Serie A with Milan and his current success at Marseilles.

Although Marseilles deny having been approached by Juventus, who are looking for cover for the injured Alessandro Del Piero, Dugarry said yesterday: "The only thing I can say is that, in fact, they are interested. But for the time being it is uncertain."

THE FORMER Aston Villa and England striker Peter Withe was hailed as a hero in Thailand after inspiring the national team to a sensational 3-1 win over the joint 2002 World Cup hosts South Korea in the Asian Games quarter-finals.

Withe shared the glory as ministers acclaimed the performance and newspapers gave front-page treatment to Thailand's finest win in international football.

It was Withe who introduced substitute Thawatchai Damrong-Ongtrakul late in the game with instructions to shoot on sight.

And it was Thawatchai whose thunderous 30-yard free-kick six minutes into extra-time gave Thailand, who were down to nine men, their famous

"golden goal" victory which set up a clash with Kuwait in the semi-finals.

"A fantastic performance. I could not have asked anything more from the team. They never gave up," Withe said, waving the national flag with his cheeks also painted in Thai colours.

The Thai-language newspaper *Krungthep Turakij* credited the win to Withe playing Queen's victory anthem "We are the Champions" in the dressing-room before the match.

Withe came to Thailand as part of a deal with the English Football Association. Sir Bobby Charlton and the Sports Minister, Tony Banks, are due in Bangkok this week to lobby for England's 2006 World Cup bid

and step up links with Thailand's football authorities.

Conversely, the South Korean supporters and media blasted their team's attitude, saying the players were over-confident and "atuck-up" following their recent victories. The team reached the World Cup finals in France.

The South Korean head coach, Huh Jung-Moo, offered an apology, saying he was sorry for the "disappointing" game. "But we will take it as an expensive lesson and start preparing for 2000 Sydney Olympics," he said.

The former German World Cup-winning captain and coach, Franz Beckenbauer, has been appointed head of the campaign committee for World Cup 2006.

Houllier spreads net far and wide

LIVERPOOL HAVE been linked with a top Polish international centre-half on the day that they had two high-quality European defenders training with them for the first time.

Gérard Houllier, the Anfield manager, is also reportedly interested in Richard Dutruel, the French goalkeeper from the Celta Vigo side which dumped his team out of the Uefa Cup last week.

Houllier had a look at the Dynamo Kiev centre-half Olexandr Holovko and the Cameroon stopper Rigobert Song, who plays for Salernitana in Italy, at Liverpool's Melwood training ground yesterday, along with Tony Silva, a 23-year-old goalkeeper from Monaco.

It was also being claimed that Liverpool had made a £2.75m bid for the Polish international defender Tomasz Lapsinski, of Widzew Lodz. The 39-year-old, who has 24 caps for his country, is also a target for Roma and Hamburg.

The Anfield side also hope to complete the free transfer signing of the veteran German international defender, Thomas Helmer, from Bayern Munich this week.

Another Dynamo Kiev defender, Oleh Luzhnyi, is reportedly joining the Portuguese club Benfica, who are coached by the former Liverpool manager Graeme Souness. The Lisbon side have apparently beaten rival bids for the 30-year-old from three English Premiership clubs.

The Nottingham Forest manager, Dave Bassett, is playing down suggestions that his unsettled Dutch striker, Pierre van Hooijdonk, is poised for a £5m move to the Spanish side Athletic Madrid.

"There's been no interest in Pierre from Athletic Madrid, or any other club for that matter," Bassett said yesterday.

Tony Thomas is set to leave Everton and become the fourth former Tranmere Rovers player at Motherwell - following Pat Nevin, Shaun Teale and God

FOOTBALL
BY TOMMY STANFORTH

Brannan to the Scottish Premier League club.

Thomas failed to agree terms with the Fir Park club when they originally tried to buy the 27-year-old defender 10 days ago, but the Goodison Park manager, Walter Smith, yesterday claimed a £150,000 deal is now "imminent".

The former Walsall manager, Jan Sorensen, is set for a return to English football with Hartlepool United.

Sorensen, a former Ajax and Denmark playmaker, is being lined up by the Third Division club's owners, Increased Oil Recovery Ltd, to take on the role of chief executive.

Chris Waddle has joined the coaching staff at Sheffield Wednesday. The former Owls and England forward, who was training at Hillsborough while he was playing for Torquay United earlier this season, has accepted a permanent role as part of Danny Wilson's backroom team.

The Premier League is set to employ respected former referees and linesmen in a quest to maintain consistency among match officials.

The Premier League referees' officer, Philip Don, has asked six former colleagues to act as experienced guides for the current top-flight officials.

The Football League is "seriously considering" the introduction of wage-capping at Third Division clubs as part of a range of measures designed to keep teams afloat - as reported in the Independent a fortnight ago.

The Leyton Orient chairman, Barry Hearn, has been given the task of investigating the proposal. The League chairman, Peter Middleton, said: "In the next three months, we will look at getting some data from clubs and then we will be in a better position to talk details about wage-capping."

TOMORROW

RICHARD WILLIAMS
SAYS FAREWELL TO
WEMBLEY DOGS



Malaysia's Zabidi Shariff connects with a spectacular overhead kick during a first-round takraw match against Singapore at the Asian Games in Bangkok yesterday. Takraw is a cross between football and volleyball. Reuters

£25m for young talent

ENGLAND'S CRICKETERS will no doubt be reflecting today that things can only get better. They may be right - if a major new sports funding initiative announced in the presence of the Sports Minister, Tony Banks, yesterday has the desired effect.

The English Sports Council has launched two new funding schemes aimed at developing young sporting talent which will command an annual total of £25m of National Lottery money.

The new figure will supplement the £30m currently being spent every year on elite British performers through the World Class Performance programme which was set up in 1996.

SPORTS FUNDING
BY MIKE ROWBOTTOM

athletes since the introduction of the World Class Performance programme, said Trevor Brook, the acting chairman of the Sports Council. We have funding in place for the next 10 years, so we can plan long term.

The two new tiers of the programme - World Class Start, and World Class Potential - will support promising competitors in the 11 to 13 age range and 15-18 range respectively. The intention is to mark out and encourage those who could be winning medals at the 2004 and 2008 Olympics.

The youngest age group, who will command £10m of the new total, can expect subsistence grants of up to £500 each to cover expenses such as travel; at least half of the new funding will go to individual sports bodies to enable them to provide extra coaching and support, and send teams abroad. The potential athletes can expect grants of up to £2,000 each.

Rovers' future in doubt

THE FUTURE of Hull Kingston Rovers is in more doubt than ever following the decision of the multi-millionaire, Paul Caddick, to pull out of a deal that could have rescued the club.

Rovers, £1.3m in debt and in the hands of administrators for nearly two years, were on the point of having their New Craven Park ground taken over by Caddick, who already owns Leeds.

But he has now decided to pull out, after being told by Hull City Council that he would have to foot the £400,000 bill to lift a restrictive covenant at the ground. Caddick also had long-term plans for a 20,000 all-seater stadium in the city, which would have incorporated a

RUGBY LEAGUE
BY DAVE HADFIELD

multi-purpose sporting academy, and would have housed Rovers, Hull City Football Club and possibly its other rugby league club, the Hull Sharks.

But those plans have also been turned down and Caddick now says that the whole scheme is dead. "Without the support of Hull City Council we are unable to proceed," he said.

The club's chairman, Barry Lilley, said that, despite the setback, it was "business as usual. We are talking to the administrators about other avenues open to us."

had been watching Caddick's take-over bid with some concern, because of the issue of cross-ownership, a club of Rovers' stature remaining in the hands of administrators is a bigger worry. The League's chief administrator, Neil Tunnicliffe, was being briefed on the situation yesterday.

AMERICAN FOOTBALL									
Jim Tombs has been named the Scottish Claymores' new defensive line coach following a spell with English Monarchs. At 32, Tombs is one of the youngest assistant coaches in the NFL Europe League.									
San Francisco's Garrison Hearst and quarterback Steve Young both set team records as the 49ers trounced the Detroit Lions 35-13 on Monday night. Hearst rushed for a franchise-record 198 yards and a touchdown and Young scrambled 10 times for 66 yards and a score as San Francisco also set a team record with 324 yards on the ground.									
NFL: San Francisco 35 Detroit 13.									

NATIONAL FOOTBALL CONFERENCE									
American	270	280	290	300	310	320	330	340	350
Green Bay	9	5	362	284					
Tampa Bay	7	5	253	275					
Detroit	5	9	278	335					
Chicago	3	11	239	349					

RUGBY LEAGUE									
Wales' new full-back Shane Howarth has been named the All-Ireland Premier League's Player of the Month for November. The former All Black with a grandfather from Cardiff produced fine performances against South Africa and Argentina.									
Hannah Stodel, 13, from Colchester, is the 1998 BT Young Journalist's Association Young Sallot of the Year.									

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WEEKEND POOLS FORECAST									
Next year's Tour of Spain will feature a tougher itinerary covering more mountain stages, organisers said yesterday.									
Brazil's Ronaldo, Croatia's Davor Suker and the French World Cup-win-									

TODAY'S FIXTURES									
PORTUGAL LEAGUE Premier Division: Aston Villa v Leicester (7.0); Leeds v Blackburn (7.0); First Division: Bolton v Manchester (7.0); Luton v Barnet (7.0); Tottenham v Ipswich (7.0); Coventry v Coventry (7.0); Second Division: Shrewsbury v York (7.0); Stockport v Newbury (7.0); Notts County v Grimsby (7.0); Chester v Wrexham (7.0); Hartlepool v Rochdale (7.0); Huddersfield v Wigan (7.0); Darlington v Hull (7.0); Hartlepool v Rochdale (7.0).									

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1	Hearts	2	Rangers	3	Dundee	4	St Mirren	5	Falkirk

WORLD COVER

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VIALI'S RESERVES OF STRENGTH P20 • BRITAIN'S SEA POWER P23

Test cricket: Second collapse of match means Australia cannot lose series but Stewart pledges to keep battling

Ashes to ashes for shamed England

IT ENDED as it has threatened to do all too often in a clatter of wickets, England's ability to collapse at a moment's notice is becoming a feature of their cricket. But, if once in a match is usually enough to damage your prospects, twice consigns you to history.

Perhaps we ought not to be surprised. Australia, who have retained the Ashes for a sixth successive time even without Shane Warne, are currently the best side in world cricket. But if England should perhaps have been beaten in the long run, the nature and speed of their demise here and at Perth has been alarming.

More worrying is that lessons are not being learned and, every time the heavy necklace of pressure is placed around their necks, England tend to choke. No amount of hard work in the nets - and England have put in the hours - can prevent that.

For that reason, blame cannot simply be attributed to one or two individuals. This is Team England, remember, and while those here, especially Graham Gooch and David Lloyd, will have their roles scrutinised, those involved back home must also expect some criticism.

Some hard thinking must be done to make English cricket more rigorous and talent-concentrated, qualities two divisions will not go nearly far enough towards improving.

The celebratory bubble that followed the headlong rush for souvenir stumps showed that the Australian players, if perhaps not the public, still regard this contest with importance. It used to be the utmost respect, of course, but England have not made them break sweat nearly enough for that.

Australia have never held the Ashes for longer, which is a reflection of just how poor English cricket has been over the past 11 years. Since Mike Gatting's Ashes-winning tour in 1986-87, the victory count has been 20-4 in Australia's favour.

The England selectors claim that this is a tougher and better prepared team than usual. Prepared for what? Failure, perhaps; winning, no. But for a fortuitous tropical storm in Brisbane, England would already be 3-0 down.

Alec Stewart, who made an unbeaten 63 and who surveyed the final moments from the other end yesterday as England lost their last four wickets in the 24 minutes after lunch,

BY DEREK PRINGLE
in Adelaide

Australia 391 & 278-5 dec
England 227 & 237
Australia win by 205 runs

had no excuses. It would be a miracle if he had, so poor has England's cricket been since Mark Ramprakash's dismissal an hour before lunch on the third day. "We came here with the intention of winning back the Ashes," the captain said. "Most of the media reckoned that was nigh on impossible, and they've been proved right."

"We didn't play well enough against the best side in the world and because of that we've been beaten really quite convincingly, especially in the two games we've lost. This is the fifth series I've been involved in against Australia, and it certainly hurts. But now that the Ashes have gone, our next objective is to try and square the series, which will not be easy."

He can say that again. After all, was not Australian cricket meant to be at a low ebb this week following revelations of a cover-up after two of their players had taken money from an Indian bookie?

Match-fixing may be an emotive business, but, if there is one team in world cricket guaranteed to be clean, it is England. On the evidence of this Test, as well as the one in Perth, the majority of their batsmen are certainly capable of throwing matches without being bribed.

To their credit, England's bowlers have competed favourably, as have Ramprakash and Nasser Hussain with the bat. Yet modern Test matches are won by teams who have 11 players contributing, rather than one or two, and it was interesting that, while Mark Taylor thought the marked difference between the contributions of the Australian and England tails was a significant factor, Stewart refused to acknowledge it.

"We played seven batsmen, Stewart said. "If they can't get the right total, you can't expect the bottom four to."

Taylor, answering a question about whether he felt Australia had such a psychological edge over his opponents that they were beaten before they came on the park, felt the advantage had been built up over a number of years.

"I think they are intimidated by us," he said, "especially their lower order. The last four or five



England's captain, Alec Stewart (left), leaves the Adelaide Oval as Australia celebrate retaining the Ashes yesterday by winning the third Test

Brendan Monks

batsmen have played a big part in this game. Glenn McGrath is not a better batsman than Peter Such or Dean Headley, but he was able to hang in there and help Justin Langer add 37 for the last wicket."

Compare this to the 17 and 16 runs England's last four managed, and you begin to understand why Stewart is wrong to dismiss the matter. Australia may have several high-class players, but it is their attention to the small detail that makes them so hard to beat. Good sides are able to bring the best out of individuals. For some reason tours seem to have become joyless, which may explain why England, who can more or less hold their own at home, have a poor record abroad. There appears to be an inner tension among players that is not obvious at home, which leads to a lack of self-expression in their cricket.

Perhaps it is the culture of practice that now pervades cricket on tour that is causing the problem. In Perth, following their defeat in two and a half days, the team were given two days off. On the second of those days most volunteered to have nets. Practice, like revising for

rather than the scoreboard, which England had to beat. Six hours is a long time to bat on a fourth-innings pitch in Australia, especially when the ball is turning as much as both Colin Miller and Stuart MacGill had made it do the previous evening. Predictably,

after a morning of stoic resistance from Stewart.

Having not faced a ball the previous day, Stewart played rather well. He is not the best technician against the turning ball, but he is a fighter and his unbeaten knock was comfortably his highest of the series. For a while he and Ramprakash looked untroubled enough to prompt recalls of the recent great escapes at Johannesburg and Old Trafford.

But if hope began to gather momentum it was quickly dashed when Damien Fleming, reverse swinging the old ball, plucked out Ramprakash's leg stump with a perfect yorker. As in the first innings, the adage "get one, get them all" came to pass. John Crawley, his temperament as well as his technique now in question, was once again found wanting outside off stump as McGrath hit the edge two balls before lunch.

After the break, England simply capitulated as McGrath and Fleming mopped up a tail which included Graeme Hick who, judging by the way he used his bat to slice a wide one to slip, was ready to surrender. The choice between Hick and Crawley for a place on this tour has been one of the most irrelevant of all

time. At the highest level both are flawed. England, who lost by 205 runs, now have to wait until the new millennium for another chance to bring the Ashes home. By then it could be a three-match series.

Leading article, Review, page 3

INSIDE

Henry Blofeld: 'I found myself wondering if I would ever again see England win back the Ashes'
Jake Lynch: 'Unless England are careful, by the time they have caught up, the Aussies will have moved on', page 21

exams, is fine if done properly, but too much makes you stale. Maybe it is that, along with the lack of a decent break, which explains why England players tend to tolerate tours rather than enjoy them.

Beginning the final day on 122 for 4, it was the clock,

England did not even get half-way towards running the clock down.

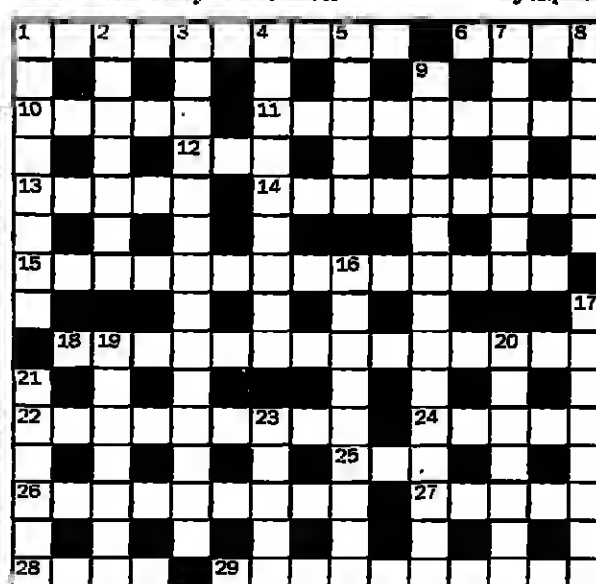
With the bounce becoming increasingly variable, the pace bowlers were also dangerous and it was them rather than the tweakers who polished off England with the second new ball

ADELAIDE SCOREBOARD

First day: Australia won 100	
AUSTRALIA - First innings 391 (J Langer 179 not out, S R Waugh 59, M A Taylor 59; D W Howley 4-77)	ENGLAND - First innings 227 (N Hussain 89 not out, M R Ramprakash 61; S C G MacGill 4-53)
AUSTRALIA - Second innings 278 (S R Waugh 103, J Langer 52, M E Waugh 51 not out)	ENGLAND - Second innings (Overnight: 122 for 4)
M R Ramprakash b Fleming 57	185 min, 173 balls, 2 fours
J P Crawley c M Waugh b McGrath 13	149 min, 122 balls, 6 fours
G A Hick c Fleming b McGrath 0	63 min, 53 balls, 1 four
D A Gough c Healy b McGrath 0	1 min, 1 ball
S A Borman c Healy b Fleming 4	9 min, 9 balls
A O Mullally c Healy b Fleming 4	6 min, 3 balls, 1 four
Progress: First day 150: 233 min, 64.1 overs, 200: 297 min, 81 overs, New ball: 82 overs, 211 for 5. Lunch 221-5 (Crawley 50, S R Waugh 59, M A Taylor 59, D W Howley 4-77, S C G MacGill 4-53)	
AUSTRALIA WON BY 205 RUNS	
Umpires: S A Borman and S J Davis. TV replay umpires: P M Angley, Maash referee: J R Reid	
Man of the match: J L Langer	
Compiled by Jo King	

THE WEDNESDAY CROSSWORD

No.3795 Wednesday 16 December By Aquila



- ACROSS**
- 1 Psst! Hairdo arranged for Gershwin, for example (10)
 - 6 Touched, dead astern (4)
 - 10 Wellington dropping spotty heart for making soup (5)
 - 11 A girl more involved in carry-on (9)
 - 12 Reminder of some evacuees (3)
 - 13 Permanent way of hand on record (5)
 - 14 Kidney-card (9)
 - 15 Dinner hour's due to restore such a person (14)
 - 18 Suspect acts, trading with £500 (6,8)
 - 22 Junior employee appears furtive (9)
 - 24 Pound once in the
- DOWN**
- 1 Appalling fellow taken off, just (8)
 - 2 One supports swimmer in a jolly group (7)
 - 3 Standard commission in market trading (14)
 - 4 Frank and Roy positioned in phone-book? (9)
 - 5 Magi's wandering, according to letter from Greece (5)
 - 7 John, say, and possibly Peter also? (7)
 - 8 Not the practice of the Circle Line (6)
 - 9 Bracing French air treating Leslie's malaria (2,12)
 - 16 Cycle outing, returning a different way (5,4)
 - 17 Those running French art activities? (a)
 - 19 Shipshape junior officer (7)
 - 20 Hug ends of elm, caber-tossing (7)
 - 21 Ancient measures of copper coins (6)
 - 23 Fitter left in Lincoln, right at the end (5)

Thursday's Solution

DOWN: 1. PSST! 2. KIDNEY 3. DINNER 4. SUSPECT 5. TRADING 6. TACHED 7. JOHN 8. PETER 9. BRACING 10. WELLINGTON 11. GIRL 12. REMINDER 13. PERMANENT 14. SUSPECT 15. DINNER 16. CYCLE 17. THOSE 18. SUSPECT 19. SHIPSHAPE 20. HUG 21. ANCIENT 22. JUNIOR 23. FITTER 24. POUND

Platt close to Sampdoria job

FOOTBALL
BY MATT BARLOW

ACCORDING TO reports in Italy yesterday, David Platt was poised to become the youngest manager in Serie A by taking over troubled Sampdoria. The Genoese side have lined up the former 32-year-old England captain as their new coach.

Platt, whose appointment is expected to be confirmed by the end of the week, looks set to pip some of European football's most famous names to land his first coaching post.

Platt, a former Arsenal, Aston Villa and Crewe midfielder who retired in the summer after helping the Gunners to the Double, made a big impression in Italy with Sampdoria, Juventus and Bari.

Sampdoria have fallen from grace in recent months. A 5-2 defeat at Lazio last Sunday saw them slide to 14th in the 18-team Serie A, just one place away from the relegation zone. The defeat brought the sack for Eugenio Spalletti, who had previously coached First Division Empoli from 1993 to 1998.

Platt, who was a player at Sampdoria when they won the

Italian Cup, has made no secret of his desire to try his hand at management.

He has travelled extensively since his retirement, picking up coaching experience in many different countries along the way, and he has also been helping Howard Wilkinson at the Football Association with England's youth and schoolboy teams.

Ray Wilkins, another England international who enjoyed a successful spell in Italy, said Platt could not afford to turn down the chance to manage one of Italy's biggest clubs. "If he is looking to go into management, and if they want him, I couldn't think of a better place to start," Wilkins said. "Samp-

doria have had their problems but they still have some very talented players."

Wilkins, who managed Queen's Park Rangers and Fulham, said the manager's job in Italy was a very different task without the endless hours of paperwork and graft which normally follows training for English managers.

He said: "The manager finishes at the same time as the players. There isn't the office work you have here. The manager's job is on the training field and I think that's where everyone wants to be, with the lads."

If Platt's appointment is confirmed he will have beaten some of European football's



Platt wins the Italian Cup with Sampdoria Empires

top names to get the job. Ex-Sampdoria players Graeme Souness, Trevor Francis, Ruud Geurts and Gianluca Vialli, and the former Blackburn and Inter Milan manager Roy Hodgson have also been linked to the vacancy.

Rovers reunion for Kidd and Gillespie

BY JOHN CURTIS

BRIAN KIDD has made Keith Gillespie his first major signing for Blackburn, and looks set to appoint Brian McClair as his deputy by the end of the week.

Rovers landed the Newcastle and Northern Ireland winger in a £2.35m deal and Gillespie has signed a four and a half year contract at Ewood Park.

Gillespie was bought by Kevin Keegan as part of the deal which took Andy Cole to Manchester United in January 1995. Kidd is no stranger to his talents after watching him develop as a youngster at Old Trafford.

Kidd could barely hide his delight at taking the 23-year-old to Ewood Park. "I don't have to justify this signing, because Keith is pure quality," he said. "He is one of a dying breed, and I believe his best years are ahead of him."

"I also believe he will prove a big favourite with the fans. Kidd added that he was unconcerned by Gillespie's recent injuries and concerns that

they could hamper his progress at Ewood Park.

"We are thoroughly happy with the medical side of things. He hasn't had a scan, and there is no problem with anything like that," Kidd said.

Gillespie, meanwhile, immediately shrugged off talk of relegation at his new club, adding he is sure that under Kidd's control Rovers will not only survive but prosper.

"I know their position in the league doesn't look good but I think it's a false picture. There are too many good players here, and I feel sure we can pull through."

McClair was given permission to leave his Motherwell contract yesterday and sign on at Rovers as Kidd's assistant manager. The Scot has agreed to the move after talks with Pat Nevin, the chief executive of Motherwell.

While Kidd will coach the first team, McClair will be a buffer with the squad as he cuts his teeth in management.

صكزا من الاصل

WEDNESDAY REVIEW

COMMENT • FEATURES • ARTS • LISTINGS • TELEVISION



Next century these children will be among the richest, best-educated and most successful people in the world. What makes the Chinese run?

BY MARTIN JACQUES

From being the poorest ethnic group in the 1950s, the Chinese now enjoy a higher living standard than any other group in Britain, including the whites. The figures speak for themselves: on average Chinese men earn £368 per week, compared with £331 for white men; only 9 per cent are unemployed, compared with 15 per cent of whites, and their participation rate in higher education is far higher than that of the white community.

The Chinese, once a byword for poverty, are now riding high. One reason is the emphasis on education, which has been the passport to success for many young Chinese; the other is more prosaic: self-employment, at the heart of which stands that traditional icon of the Chinese community the world over, the restaurant.

The Chinese population in Britain may be less than 200,000 – or 0.3 per cent of the population – but their rising fortunes mirror those of Chinese communities all around the world. The Chinese diaspora – the largest of them all – numbers about 50 million (including Taiwan but excluding Hong Kong) and can be found from the United States to Latin America, from Australia to the Caribbean, from Africa to Europe. Their situation, of course, varies enormously from country to country but the striking characteristic, almost everywhere, is how well they are doing.

Take the US, where the Chinese community arrived in the middle of the 19th century first attracted by the gold rush and then to work as coolies building the railroads. They suffered harsh discrimination, were the prime targets of the exclusion acts of the 1880s (which all but halted further Chinese immigration), and were not allowed to become American citizens until the Second World War.

Today they are the educational high-fliers of American society. As Professor Ling-Chi Wang, of the University of California at Berkeley, points out: "Chinese Americans have done phenomenally well in public schools, and especially in the elite universities and colleges. I predict that, in the near future, a majority of students at the nine campuses of the University of California – which are among the leading educational institutions in the US – will be Asian Americans, the largest group of whom will be Chinese Americans."

In California's Silicon Valley, the entrepreneurial heart of the information revolution, about one-third of the engineers are Asian-Americans, with the Chinese comprising the largest single group. Ling-Chi Wang argues that "the migration of Chinese intellectuals to the United States since 1945 has far exceeded the Jewish migration in the 1930s, and will be seen by future historians as one of the most significant contributions to the development of American science and technology."

A similar picture of achievement is being repeated in Australia and Canada. But it is in South-east Asia that the Chinese diaspora is not only greatest in number, dating back many centuries, but has also been most successful.

Though comprising a minority in every country in the region, bar Singapore, everywhere the ethnic Chinese are the most prosperous single group. In Indonesia, though comprising only 3 per cent of the population, they own 80 per cent of the wealth; similar disparities apply in Malaysia and Thailand.

So how can we explain the success of

the overseas Chinese? It is not easy to generalise across continents and divergent histories. Many of the characteristics displayed by the Chinese – their belief in education, their appetite for hard work, the role of the family – are also true of other migrant groups. However, Wang Gungwu, an eminent historian of the Chinese diaspora, now living in Singapore, argues that the history of the overseas Chinese has imbued their communities with certain traits which distinguish them from other migrant groups.

Overwhelmingly from southern China, and regarded by the old, northern dynasties as inferior, they learnt to live in China and then in the countries where they chose to settle by relying on their own resources, never looking to the state for protection or assistance. According to Wang

Gungwu: "Their survival demanded that they had to make adjustments to different cultural circumstances, different political environments and adjust accordingly in order that they could still do business and maintain their living standards, sometimes under very hostile conditions."

Everywhere, when people speak about the Chinese communities, the same words recur: hard-working, pragmatic, adaptable, hard-headed, resilient. Always a minority in usually unfriendly conditions, the overseas Chinese have relied on their own support systems – the family and kinship networks based on their ancestral villages in southern China. Chinese communities boast a plethora of private schools, credit organisations, cultural groups and the like, not to mention those Chinatowns across the world which are

the physical embodiment of that sense of difference and solidarity.

For Wang Gungwu, the glue which coheres Chinese communities even when they are, on the face of it, quite disparate, has something to do with a unique quality of Chinese-ness. "The sense of Chinese-ness comes from an identification with the history of China as a distinct area, in which the historical events are well recorded but quite different from everybody else's. It's that long, continuous evolution of particular ways of looking at the world, ways of expressing themselves – in terms of language, literature, art, ceramics, customs and practices, all of which have deep roots and all of which are so different from other cultures."

With the partial exception of South-east Asia, the success of the overseas Chinese

is a very recent phenomenon, confined to the past two or three decades. Before then, the overseas Chinese were generally near the bottom of the pile in many of their adopted countries. Nor was China, one of the poorest countries in the world, a source of prestige or self-esteem.

Buried deep in the psyche of the collective Chinese memory of course, is the glory of the Middle Kingdom, when China was the epicentre of world civilisation – as one European monarch found out to his cost, according to a popular apocryphal tale. This monarch wrote to the Chinese emperor proposing a delegation to discuss trade, and received a rather curt reply, thanking him for his interest, but saying that they had everything that they could possibly need, and there was nothing that he could have that they could possibly want.

The recent success of the overseas Chinese, however, has coincided with the spectacular transformation of China itself. Testimony to that sense of Chinese-ness that Wang Gungwu describes, the overseas Chinese have been crucial to China's economic growth, supplying around 80 per cent of the inward investment over the past two decades. Unsurprisingly, China's renaissance is not only a source of pride for the overseas Chinese, it is also exerting its own particular spell, as growing numbers of overseas Chinese make the journey to China, often for the first time.

As with migrants from other countries who return to their ancestral homeland, what they discover is often a bewildering and alien environment. Katherine Gin, a high-flying Chinese-American in her mid-twenties, had decided to work in Peking for a couple of years to learn Chinese and discover her Chinese self.

"It certainly didn't feel like a homecoming," she says. "It was a mixed thing. Originally I came to be with people who looked like me, but that surface connection didn't go very far. It's when I am walking round the streets that I most feel like a stranger. But when I am in people's homes, I feel much more at home because the culture is so similar to that of my family back in the States."

Such an ability to deal with different countries and cultures is one of the great advantages of a diaspora. Historically, not quite belonging, being a minority forever the perennial outsider, was regarded as a distinct disadvantage, but in the era of globalisation where mobility is seen as a virtue, multiple identities are not only more common, they are also a major asset. As Robin Cohen writes in his book *Global Diasporas*: "In the age of globalisation, their language skills, familiarity with other cultures and contacts in other countries make many members of the diasporas highly competitive in the international labour, service and capital markets."

This is certainly true of the overseas Chinese. Their capacity to operate in different countries and contrasting cultures is an extraordinary facility. Explore the family situation of almost anyone in London's Chinatown, or for that matter in Sheffield's Chinese community, and compared with your average white Briton it is another world: family members are invariably dotted around the world, be it in Hong Kong, Malaysia, Canada, China, Australia or wherever. While we used to follow the flag, they follow the family.

Home can be many different places, citizenship – in contrast to our experience – is an issue neither of principle nor culture but pragmatism. As Zongwu Li, a young Chinese engineer in Silicon Valley told me: "It doesn't matter whether I'm a Chinese or American citizen, we are basically living in a global village."

Or Wei Chao Yi, a businessman who divides his time between Melbourne in Australia and China's Tianjin: "I don't care if I hold a Chinese or Australian passport. It depends on which is most convenient." As it happens both – for the moment – are Chinese citizens.

There has been much fanciful talk of the Chinese diaspora as some new, great multinational power. This is an absurd exaggeration. Nonetheless, it is clear that, especially in the context of China's growing success, the Chinese diaspora could well prove to be one of the great winners of the new millennium.

'Proud to be Chinese' is on BBC2 on Wednesday, 16 December at 7.30pm

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Save songbirds

Sir: The WWF report *Doomsday for Wildlife* (report, 14 December) is right to call for greater legal protection of Britain's wildlife, yet this alone will not halt the decline in biodiversity. The long-term viability of wildlife populations depends upon a more sustainable use of the farmed landscape and this can only be brought about through reform of agricultural subsidies to place greater emphasis on environmental stewardship.

Declining species such as the water vole and skylark cannot depend solely on the continued management of fragmented "island" reserves, but demand a more hospitable "wider" countryside. Throughout Britain local biodiversity action plans are being developed through the co-operation of statutory and non-statutory organisations. If the targets are to be achieved a massive injection of government and private sector finance must be forthcoming. The time is nigh when each person should ask how much they value the natural world.

JAY DOYLE
Biodiversity Projects Officer
Surrey Wildlife Trust
Pirbright, Surrey

Sir: Thank you for your timely articles on our disappearing wildlife, particularly the drastic decline in farmland birds. We have reached this desperate situation by neglecting to follow traditional farming practices.

All of us travelling through the countryside pass gapped and mutilated hedges that are mechanically flailed every year to within an inch of their lives. These hedges are cut so low and thin that they provide birds with no cover to protect them from predators and disturbance during nesting.

Cutting hedges every year prevents hawthorn, which flowers on year-old wood, from producing berries as food for birds in the winter. In contrast to the "tidy" hedges surrounding most farmland, the tall, thick hawthorn hedge outside my house teems with sparrows, buntings, blackbirds, robins and tits and is beautiful in flower in summer and fruit in winter.

The Government could easily extend the measures that already exist for the protection of trees to our surviving hedges.

If, in addition, we want to help reverse the loss of our ground-nesting birds such as skylarks, plovers and grey partridge, then the Government must resist the unlimited area access demanded by a small militant minority of Right to Roam campaigners. Most people do understand that in order to preserve our wildlife there must be restrictions to prevent disturbance and that unlimited access over the remaining habitat for a selfish few would leave nothing for the rest of us to enjoy in the future.

OLIVER FENTON
Deusbury, West Yorkshire

Sir: When the disappearance of songbirds is discussed, why is the balance between them and their natural predators so seldom considered? Factors such as loss of habitat that cause the birds to decrease act only indirectly on their predators.

Our leafy suburb is a relative haven for wildlife. When I moved here 28 years ago, our garden regularly harboured scores of sparrows, two pairs of robins, numerous wrens and always at least two blackbirds and a pair of songthrushes. It was visited by many other species of small birds such as flycatchers, finches and tits.

The only small birds that I see regularly now are blue tits. We have a nesting box which they use every year.

In this area we now have foxes, numerous crows, jays, magpies and a pair of kestrels. I sometimes hear screams at night and in the morning find a heap of feathers on the grass where a fox has been. Of the song thrushes that have tried to live here in recent years, the last ones, two years ago, nested in ivy on a tree and had their nest pulled out by a crow.

JUDITH PETO
Bromley, Kent

Marking 2000

Sir: Professor Ken Pounds (letter, 14 December) was concerned that many of the Millennium Commission landmark projects would have to cut back on their original plans.

All of the 28 major capital projects, each costing more than £30m, are being constructively developed towards realising their original vision. A lot of hard work remains to be done and inevitably projects on this scale will encounter problems. But we are working hard in an effort to ensure their successful completion and are confident that all these projects will be realised.

Although the Millennium Experience is obviously our biggest project, only 20 per cent of our total budget of £2bn has been allocated to it. The bulk of our money has been used to support 187 capital projects. Consequently we devote due attention to these projects, ensuring that they provide lasting benefits to the public throughout the UK.

MIKE O'CONNOR
Director
The Millennium Commission
London SW1

Sir: Of course the Government wants us to hoard goods ahead of the millennium ("Move made to halt hoarding for 2000", 14 December). How else will it prevent the UK slipping into recession next year?

NIGEL WILKINS
London SW7

Venice preserved

Sir: I write in response to the Italian Environment Ministry's rejection of the "Moses" barrage proposals for the Venice Lagoon (report, 11 December). The British press has frequently highlighted a lack of environmental awareness in Italy. At last the Environment Ministry has taken a stand to favour a long-term environmentally sustainable solution to the problems of Venice over a short-term outdated engineering solution.

Having spent the last five years researching the problems of Venice and its lagoon, I understand the urgency of resolving the problem of flooding but feel that continued emphasis on the barrage has only masked a number of other more up-to-date and appropriate solutions.

Venice lies in a fragile yet constantly evolving coastal environment and the problems facing this famous city cannot be separated from those concerning its 58,000 hectare lagoon (and its 200,000 hectare drainage basin). The lagoon has gradually been altered from what was once a low-energy, shallow coastal lagoon (rarely over 2 metres in



Christmas Workers No 3: the post office worker, on the night shift at the Cowley sorting office Tom Pilston

depth), to a deep, high-energy, maritime bay (over 15 metres deep in places).

Flooding remains just one issue in a complex network of inter-related problems which must be resolved through a long-term management plan which incorporates principles of morphological restoration (such as restoration of natural

water depths, the re-creation of buffer zones and the return of peripheral areas of the lagoon to free tidal expansion). In the short term, low-cost flood-proofing measures can be carried out within the urban centres of the lagoon to abate repeated flooding problems, while larger-scale restoration plans are under way.

Perhaps more attention should also be given to local opinion. A survey carried out by myself in July 1996 showed only 9 per cent of the local population interviewed were in favour of the barrage. 68 per cent were against and 23 per cent felt they knew too little to comment.

At last, funding for research

and projects to resolve the problems of Venice and its lagoon may no longer be monopolised by the barrage proposals. Venice could at last be about to escape from the political and organisational trap in which it has found itself for the last 20 years.

ZOSIA MACDOUGALL
Granchester, Cambridge

Sir: Any downturn in high street spending this Christmas is in part explained by your report (12 December) that a million Britons have gone shopping in New York in the last couple of months. To offset airfares and hotel bills a conservative estimate would suggest that such shoppers would probably be spending £500 each in New York shops. That is some £500m out of

our economy and into the US one. The remedy, of course, is in the hands of our retailers.

JAN POKORNY
Leicester

Sir: Brigadier Peter Sincovec (letter, 12 December) claims that British forces were stationed in Bahrain

IN BRIEF

"serving our own interests". Whose interests were being served exactly? Not mine. Could it have been those of Britain's arms traders and other corporate interests to whom human rights are secondary?

DAVID CROMWELL
Southampton, Hampshire

Sir: There is nothing aristocratic about the Dutch prefix "van" ("Landowner puts walkers on warpath", 14 December). It simply means "of". The gentleman in question's family apparently originated from a place called Hoogstraten; that is all.

MAYKE HOGESTIJN
Radvage, Buckinghamshire

Tiny consumers

Sir: The Advertising Association does not directly represent advertisers and agencies ("Advertisers help parents beat commercials", 10 December). It is a federation of associations representing the advertising industry in its entirety; that includes the commercial broadcast and print media. In this respect, those who call for a ban or further restriction on advertising to children overlook the disastrous impact that such measures would have on the funding of, for example, children's programming.

The guide we have published is not "a further attempt to fend off the threat of tighter controls on advertising to children." It is an initiative to help parents with the challenges of raising children in a commercial, consumer society, of which advertising is only a part. A restriction on advertising to children would not make parenting any easier, let alone change the nature of the modern world.

Finally, the Independent Television Commission (ITC) is the statutory body responsible for governing TV advertising, not the Broadcast Advertising Clearance Centre (BACC). The BACC was set up and is funded by the industry itself, to ensure that TV advertising is of the highest standard. It vets all advertisements prior to broadcast, based on its own detailed interpretation of the ITC's codes of practice. Like the ITC, the BACC codes include a lengthy and stringent section on children, so that advertising to, or involving, this special audience is particularly responsible.

JAMES AITCHISON
The Advertising Association
London SW1

Sad old man

Sir: I sat down to read John Walsh's article "All our tomcrows" (11 December), and felt much comforted by its chatty appraisal of what it feels like to be faced with approaching old age. Yes, I thought, he's got it right; obviously he is facing the same problems of change of tempo as I am.

In fact I had been thinking almost exactly those same thoughts a few minutes earlier as I jog-trotted home from the hairdresser's. It was necessary to trot as it was too cold to walk, but en route I had cursed my growing awareness of arthritis in my right hip. Too bad that age has to take its toll in this way.

Then I read on. Suddenly my idle appraisal of the article was catapulted out of its laquear. I realised that I am almost half as old again as John Walsh. John, wake up! What are you doing, thinking of yourself as becoming old? You are scarcely in the middle years! It sounds as if your attitudes are hardening before your arteries do. Change your outlook and maybe the arteries will last a bit longer also!

See you in the yellow-curtained day-room, in about 40 years. I shall be 103, you a dapper 85-year-old.

CONNIE BURNAGE
Newport Pagnell, Buckinghamshire

Worth a statue

Sir: Ian Jack ("Raise statues to people, not concepts", 12 December) pleads for the vacant Trafalgar Square plinth to be filled with the statue of "an individual human being, a citizen of Britain and its former empire who deserves to be remembered" and makes a number of suggestions.

Would it not be more imaginative, at the close of this bloodiest of centuries, to commemorate the most representative of all the figures of our time: the refugee? One individual human being personifying the untold millions who have been uprooted, assaulted, made homeless and suffered every kind of violence. Perhaps a child.

It is a subject that would win grateful recognition wherever human rights and values are acknowledged. The Very Rev MICHAEL MAYNE KCVO
Salisbury

Sir: Leslie Jerman (letter 11 December) asks what the Duke of Cambridge did for us to deserve his statue in Whitehall. Well, as Commander-in-Chief of the British Army for nearly forty years he was the champion of ordinary soldiers, and worked tirelessly to improve their conditions. Although he was labelled a reactionary by some, his defence of the regimented system and resistance to demands for reduction in the Army's strength left Britain better prepared for the First World War than it otherwise would have been. He deserves to be remembered.

DONALD FOREMAN
The Constitutional Monarchy Association
London E4

Towering rage

Sir: Reports of the possible demise of Wembley Stadium's famous twin towers appear to have sparked a peculiarly British storm of protest.

Since my first visit to Wembley as a boy I have visited the stadium four or five times a year for various sporting and musical events. It holds many happy memories. However, the only outstanding features are the twin towers and (usually) the playing surface. The seating is disgracefully cramped, the toilet facilities are hopeless and the catering worse (not to say scandalously overpriced). Those twin towers are unique. But should they stand in the way of the long-needed reconstruction? Of course not.

We have a habit in this country of being strangled by our heritage rather than learning from it whilst preserving the best of it. Let us not drown in nostalgia.

STEVEN POWELL
London N7

Delicate blooms

Sir: I am beginning to suspect that your gardening correspondent is a couple of paces short of a cloche. Her suggestions for "gifts for green-fingered friends" (12 December) comprised in their entirety: pashmina shawls at £195 each; garden pots (£170 to £430); terracotta pots suitable for decoration only since they have narrow necks and do not withstand frost (£85); herb collections in a basket (£30); sets of bath oil, soap etc (£24.95); young trees (unpriced). I shall look around my local allotments in the new year for anyone sporting a snazzy shawl.

PETER POOL
Shipley, West Yorkshire

Collecting other people's holiday snaps for fun and profit

SOMETIMES YOU hear of old photos being sold for a lot of money, but you can also make money from modern everyday photography. The other day, a photograph of me was sold for £50. You don't believe me? I'll tell you the whole instructive story.

First of all, you must know that I am an art collector, and occasionally go to art auctions. Well, once a year. And it is always the same auction, where by astutely reckless bidding I have built up over the years a wonderful collection of British photography. The auction is...

Perhaps it would explain things quicker if I quoted from a letter sent to me this year by my favoured local camera shop, Telescopio Len's. (Not a misprint. The shop is owned by a man called Len.)

"Dear Sir, as you are aware we have in recent years switched to a policy of making customers pay in advance for all development and print work. This was to avoid having large quantities of uncollected holiday photos on our hands. We assumed that people who paid in advance would also take the trouble to collect. As this has only partially worked, we still have a large backlog of uncollected photos which will be auctioned on 10 December at 10am prompt."

I was there, on the dot, in the narrow shopway of Telescopio Len's - closed to the public for the morning - with my catalogue, entitled "A Sale of Important Late 20th Century Photography: A Vital Addition to Our Knowledge of British Domestic Life."

Lot 1 was described as "An En-

semble of Photographs Depicting Unknown British Families on Holiday And Elsewhere. But Mostly On Holiday". Lot 2 was marked: "As Description for Lot One". Lot Three was marked: "See Previous Descriptions".

"You will gather from the catalogue," said the auctioneer, addressing us before the sale began, "that these photos would form the basis for a wonderful archive of British life at the end of the millennium. You might deduce that all the lots are roughly similar. Nothing could be further from the truth. Some are highly skilled, some display more of a rough, peasant technique. The locale varies from Spanish beaches to Swiss hillside, and even to a car park in Munich where that particular photographer was trapped for three days..."



MILES KINGSTON

'Lot one. 81 photographs featuring a family with no dress sense, especially the mother'

"Get on with it!" shouted one of my fellow bidders, a man called Graham who - I happen to know -

only buys these photos for purposes of blackmail. "Right," said the auctioneer, blushing slightly. "Lot one. A series of 81 photographs featuring a family with no dress sense, especially the mother. They are seen at home, at birthday parties and on the beach of an unidentified Greek island. What am I bid?"

The auction got underway and the lots fell rapidly under the hammer. Most of them fetched no more than £5 or £10, but considering they had all been paid for already, that represented pure profit for Len, and some of them went higher than that...

"Lot 37 contains assorted black and white photographs of steam engines in Poland or possibly Portugal," said the auctioneer. A man in the corner who had not so far bid

suddenly came to life and said "£20!" loudly and stared fiercely at the rest of us. We let him have it for £20. "There's always one steam nut," Graham muttered to me.

And so the auction went on, until we were halted by an extraordinary interruption. There was a hammering at the front door of the shop, and when a member of staff went to see who it was, it turned out to be a Mr Whittaker who had come very belatedly to collect his summer holiday photographs.

"You've what?" he cried. "You've put my holiday snaps up for sale? But I've paid for them! They're mine!"

"Not now," said Len. "If not collected within a month, they belong to us. Anyway, I think they've already been sold. To this gentleman here."

To my alarm, Mr Whittaker was directed to me. He approached, dangerously red in the face.

"I am very happy to sell your holiday snaps back to you," I said, meaning to be conciliatory. "£15 seem about right?"

"Why, you..." He raised his fist. Then I seemed to see a bright flash of a light. In fact, that's just what it was. A flash bulb. Len had raised his camera and snapped Mr Whittaker on the verge of laying me out.

"One extra lot," said Len cheerfully. "Rare photo of physical violence in my photographic shop. Will anyone offer me £10?"

I was prepared to go to £30 but it eventually went to Mr Whittaker for £50, who paid up and stormed out. Later, Len went halves and gave me £25 of it.

THE INDEPENDENT

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In state pensions there should be no compulsion

THE CONSULTATION document on pensions launched yesterday by Alistair Darling, the Secretary of State for Social Security, marks a step back from the "hard choices" we were promised when Labour were in Opposition. Indeed, they are a very long way from the options considered during the ill-starred social security "partnership" of Frank Field and Harriet Harman after they took power.

Compulsion - legislation to compel citizens to save for their retirement in individual accounts - is no longer to be an option. This is much to the distaste of Mr Field, who wished to see a compulsorily-funded universal scheme to provide pensions, while escaping the stigma and disincentives to work involved in means-testing. Much of the Conservative press has pressed for full privatisation. Mr Darling's opponents will accuse him of a politically-motivated fudge, of splicing together incompatible policies to bodge one incoherent "third way" initiative.

Such critics are wrong, however aesthetically appealing their theoretical castles in the air. Legislating for individual savings cannot escape the fact that it will always ultimately be society as a whole that raises money to care for people in their old age.

If money to stave off such an outcome did not involve means-tested top-up payments to the poorest pensioners, it would have to be paid out under another guise. No one is prepared to see the elderly reduced to penury, and the simple fact is that there are millions who cannot save for their pension, since they just do not earn enough. Even if the low-paid saved all their lives, other taxpayers' money would have to be used to relieve poverty.

Even a semi-private scheme would find it difficult to "top-up" its poorer members. If the economy were to nose-dive, or the stock market perform badly over a long period, the responsibility of doing so could prove too much. No government could afford to see such schemes go bankrupt, robbing millions of their savings; if that were threatened, the scheme would be nationalised, and we would be back to square one.

Nor is it clear that the pensions "crisis", predicted by alarmists, will materialise. Britain is not sitting on the time-bomb facing governments on the continent. Her population seems already to have endured much of the increase in average age: Britain's demographic profile, so often cited as the spur to reform, does not show that a rapidly-ageing population will necessitate more and more social spending on the old. In fact, the personal pensions better-off Britons have taken to with aplomb will mean much of the slack will be taken up by the private sector.

Cost has also reined in radical ambitions. Forcing the members of the state's own incomes-related pensions scheme, Serps, to leave en masse would blow a gaping



hole in the Government's finances. Far better to reform Serps as a new "state second pension", a flat-rate rather than earnings-related scheme which encourages those earning below £9,000 a year to save. The Conservatives focused on encouraging those on middling incomes to opt out altogether in the late 1980s; this inevitably did not do as much as Mr Darling to secure the futures of those further down the earnings ladder.

The poor will thus have a guaranteed retirement income. Those further up the income ladder will be encouraged to save just as will those below them in the earnings ladder, and have their National Insurance contributions lowered accordingly. Speeding access to "stateholder pensions" is also vital, since part of the problem in encouraging people to take on extra pensions is that they are shrouded in the most incomprehensible jargon.

Spreading the burden between public and private sectors will be a slow process. But Government has no alternative, since "radical" solutions are such an illusion.

The bishops don't need more power

TO ARGUE over the power of dismissal of church wardens may seem a peculiarly arcane form of activity for the House of Commons. Most people have no idea what the role and powers of church wardens are, never mind that to change their status requires the approval of something called the Ecclesiastical Committee of the Commons.

In fact church wardens form a key part of the relationship between the church and the laity in the parish, elected or chosen by the parish council. To make them, as the Commons is being asked, subject to hire-and-fire by the bishops is no idle piece of modernisation. It strikes at the heart of where the Church itself feels it should stand in relationship to the communities it is still supposed to serve as the representatives of the official religion.

If the Church wants to abandon that role, so be it. The time for disestablishment has come, the more so if Dr Carey is allowed his vision of a Church run like Boots the Chemist. Parliament, however, should not allow him to do it by stealth.

A very silly point

THE ENGLAND cricket team's sad defeat in the Ashes series against Australia had a depressing air of inevitability about it. "Australia batted and bowled better than us," the captain, Alec Stewart, told reporters. In the circumstances, this was rather unnecessary. Given the failure of England's tail to stand up to inexperienced bowling and the mediocre sameness of England's bowling, the statement would have brought forth a gust of black laughter had it not been so painfully, tear-jerkingly obvious. England's captain could only have added: and they can catch the ball.

The trouble with Europe is that you have to swallow it whole

MEET TABLOID Tony, scourge of "lunatics and headbangers". Tone can be found down at the Dog and Duck on a Friday night musing: "He's maaad, that William Hague. Looney tunes. Barney army. And another thing - those Tories. They're maaad as well. One short of a six pack."

When Mr Blair adopts undiluted the demotic vocabulary of his spokesman Alastair Campbell, something is not quite right. It is a sign that the Prime Minister's usual poise and confidence has deserted him; a flight into the deceptive certainties of belligerence. Prime Ministers only pay this much attention to the Leader of the Opposition when they are stuck for anything more substantial to say about their own predicament.

Previously, the Government barely needed to acknowledge the existence of the party opposite. When I watch the rather sad little gaggle clustered around Mr Hague at Prime Minister's Questions, glossy figures of yesterday who would so palpably like to be somewhere else - indeed be someone, anyone else rather than a Tory front-bencher at the end of the 20th century - I am not struck by the sheer force of their destructive frenzy. Michael Portillo, chief headbanger in absentia, orbits in political outer space: Peter Dainoff mutters shyly about the folly of it all; and Michael Howard - well, where is Mr Howard now you come to mention him?

But Mr Hague at least has the policy he wants and on which he is happy to fight the next election. Opposing the single currency is a cause around which to unite his fractious and shak-

en troops. But in the wake of the Cranborne debacle, he is in danger of repeating Old Labour's mistake and addressing himself purely to the Conservative Party, which knows its mind on Europe, rather than to the public, which is still undecided.

His insistence that Mr Blair is sacrificing British "independence" to the European monolith made the heart sink a bit. Independence from what? No island is an island. We are not independent from Europe: we are part of it. The question is on what terms, with what goals and how we should respond when we believe that the Continent's institutions have taken a wrong turn. A decision not to enter EMU does not surgically remove Britain from Europe. It simply changes the nature of our relations with those in the euro zone. Mr Hague needs to start making a more positive argument about Britain's future outside the single currency.

But Mr Blair has the more pressing Euro problem. He has been forced into a far hastier advance on integration than he would have naturally pursued and is palpably unhappy with the altered state in which his policy finds itself. Until the autumn, Britain was being eased gently into EMU. In the television ads that awful man was striding around his office barking at the staff to "get ready for the euro". The start-up of EMU on 1 January would accustom Britain to the idea of the single currency and could be marketed by such silver-tongued salesmen as Gordon Brown and Peter Mandelson as "inevitable". We would be halfway into the euro



ANNE MCELVOY
Blair has been forced into a far hastier advance on integration than he would have naturally pursued

before the small matter of a referendum was even raised.

Then along came Oskar Lafontaine, as German Finance Minister. Unlike Gerhard Schröder or Tony Blair, who have succeeded in politics because they mastered the art of not committing themselves, Herr Lafontaine believes that politics should be the clash of great armies, and that if he believes in an integrated European state, he should say so and tell us why. This frankness is the last thing the British government expected.

It opens up too many awkward questions about economic management, taxation and opt-outs and how much diversity the New Europe will tolerate. The SPD's own think-tank, the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, has cold feet over Herr Lafontaine's costly plans to reduce German unemploy-

ment. He is the kind of high-spending Old Labourite Mr Blair usually crosses the road to avoid. He also happens to hold one of the most influential economic posts within the EU.

The next untenable proposition is that Britain can lead in Europe. It cannot. You cannot lead as the third player, behind a powerful Franco-German alliance, around whose requirements the EU was constructed and who can always tip the balance against Britain. The attempt to sell integration to the British on the grounds that we will have a significant amount of control over what happens next stretches credibility. If Britain is not a strong enough voice to save the duty-free concession on a bottle of gin at Heathrow, then it is unlikely to change the philosophy of the new corporation, nor influence the direction of policy other than in the direction that Bonn and Paris have decided that it should go.

Yet if Britain cannot enjoy the fruits of leadership, the public will rightly ask what the benefits of following are. This turns the beam of attention to the financial terms of Britain's relations with the EU. The £2bn budget rebate is not assured. The EU gives and the EU takes away. The rebate was a temporary trade-off achieved by Margaret Thatcher to make her government feel better about about deepening integration, which she aided by being a signatory to the Single European Act.

As one of the main supporters of EU enlargement to the east, Britain can justifiably be asked to cough up to support this development. The

only way to sell this to a public which has well-developed doubts about the uses to which the EU puts the funds of its contributors is to call for closer involvement in EU management, which means open acceptance of its widening political dimension.

This means tearing up the notion, reiterated hereto by Mr Blair, that EMU is a purely economic project and that we can judge whether it is in our interest on purely balance-sheet terms. Now he has called on his Cabinet to promote stronger pro-European ties and not simply coast along as idle well-wishers.

If the Prime Minister is serious about this new line, supporters of the EMU will have to defend the whole romantic concept of politically unified Europe and argue that the benefits of this dream outweigh the advantages of electoral control and the kind of democratic legitimacy currently enjoyed by Britain. Some believe this to be worth the candle and are happy to put the case. Many more are unconvinced and were far happier with the more cautious model of limited enthusiasm. They will find themselves called on to support a growing number of measures and ideas about which they have the gravest doubts themselves. That is harder to sustain than one might think.

NETANYAHU is trying frantically to appease hardliners by freezing withdrawal from the West Bank and reneging on the commitment to release political prisoners. Predictably, the Palestinians have responded with further violence. Given Mr Arafat's poor health, and with militant groups like Hamas ridiculing the peace process, their frustration is understandable. But it would still be wiser to observe restraint while the sands run

out for an Israeli prime minister who has been catastrophic for hopes of a Middle East settlement. Israel's next government might not do more for peace; but it could not do less. *Straits Times, Singapore*

NETANYAHU SHOULD not blame the Palestinians when his fanatic foreign minister makes reckless statements calling on Jewish settlers to grab Palestinian lands, and threatens to annex the West

MONITOR

ALL THE NEWS OF THE WORLD
International comment on the current situation in the Middle East

Bank if Arafat declares his state. It is obvious that Israel's commitment to its agreements with the Palestinians will have to be carried through if the peace process is to be served. The US is sending a clear message to Israeli leaders that there can be no turning back, and that the Israeli premier will have to make a choice. *Jordan Star*

NETANYAHU PUT the latest accord on hold, in part because of Arafat's continued insistence on declaring a Palestinian state in May. Clinton's visit has come at a timely moment for him; dogged by impeachment he will enhance his reputation by being seen to be trying to rescue the accord. For all three leaders the visit is a good thing but whether it will ultimately solve any of their problems remains open. *Gulf Times, Qatar*

THE HISTORIC meeting in Gaza was rightly regarded by Netanyahu as fulfilling Israel's requirement for a public Palestinian reaffirmation of the path of peace and coexistence with Israel. But the government is also correct in insisting that the Palestinians abide by their other commitments made at Wye, particularly regarding security cooperation, before handing over any more Israeli territory. *The Jerusalem Post, Israel*

QUOTE OF THE DAY
"Though Britain may not be the mightiest nation on earth, we can be pivotal."
Tony Blair
Prime Minister

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY
"Literature is news that stays news."
Ezra Pound,
American poet

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PANDORA

LAST WEEKEND saw a new flurry of stories about Richard Tomlinson, a former MI6 officer now resident in Switzerland after spending six months in prison for threatening to write about his official spying career. Yesterday Tomlinson told one of Pandora's colleagues that he has ambitious plans for the future, albeit not in a literary vein. He's planning to launch a new "business intelligence" organisation which he wants to call "SPECTRE" - in conscious homage to the fictional spy network that James Bond delighted in battling.

"I might ask David Shayler if he wants to join too," Tomlinson joked, referring to the MI6 renegade. However, in view of Tomlinson's past record for confidentiality, Pandora wonders how many corporations will be keen to entrust Tomlinson with their secret assignments.

PETER STRINGFELLOW and a bevy of his pneumatic "angels" enlivened the launch party for Rupert Steiner's book *My First Break: How Entrepreneurs Get Started* on Monday. Stringfellow hosted his own reception for London's Tory Euro-candidates earlier this month at his topless nightclub. That was just the start, Stringfellow told Pandora.

"I am going to throw a big party for Jeffrey Archer when the race for London mayor gets hotter," he said. In the meantime, he confessed: "I have to be careful who I invite, because I am a Europhile. I like Ken Clarke and Michael Heseltine."

What about the Boy Wonder himself, William Hague? "He won't come down. But I'm sure if he did and spent some time with me, I could do something for his image." Anything that Stringfellow could do might be an improvement at this point.

BACK AT the Rupert Steiner party, the author made a special effort to meet Pandora. The young *Sunday Times* journalist who boasts of getting his start in journalism by flogging tittle-tattle about his schoolmates to the tabloids went "off the record" to confess some of his early scoops. Suddenly he turned to a young lady and introduced her as, lo and behold, one of his old school friends.

"You knew I sold stories about people at school, didn't you?" Steiner said to her.

Looking aghast, she managed to reply: "No, I didn't

actually. Who did you sell them about?"

Steiner became reticent and refused, despite her entreaties, to divulge names. (Incidentally, Pandora has learned that Prince William attended the same school as Steiner. Of course, it's impossible to believe that Steiner would have stooped to selling stories about the future King.)

AFTER A Woolworth's spokesman told Pandora that the retail giant could not offer chocolate British coins because their supplier claimed sterling sweets were "forbidden by law", she spoke to the Royal Mint.

"It is illegal to sell anything that could be mistaken for a real coin," a Mint spokesperson conceded yesterday. "Use of the royal portrait would be out of order. On the other hand, I don't believe we've ever cracked down on chocolate coins in the past."

Good news! While it may be too late for this Christmas, hopefully Woolies will find a supplier willing to mint something more patriotic than chocolate deutzmarks and euros to stuff into next year's Xmas stockings.

PANDORA HAS received an anguished fax from acclaimed songwriter/poet Fran Landesman, a loyal fan of Sir Bob Hope, whose shabby treatment in the current issue of *The New Yorker* we reported yesterday.

"I will never buy another copy... or see another Woody Allen flick," writes Landesman, referring to the neurotic NY comic's criticism of Sir Bob's twilight career. In a prophetic conclusion, Landesman offered some lines of her own: "The only consolation/For enduring this sorry situation/Is if you live long enough/You may learn/How the little shifts like it/When it's their turn."

IS CHELSEA Clinton finally rebelling - in her own mute way - against her disgraced father, the famous junk food and cigar aficionado? So it would seem after her visit to one of Israel's most famous hamburger bars.

"She did not want to eat any meat. I think she is a vegetarian," said the nonplussed owner of burger joint Al-Lotus, which Chelsea visited while with her parents on this week's Middle East peace mission. Instead of a hamburger, Chelsea opted for hummus, french fries and a cup of Arabic coffee.

Undiplomatically, she ignored the kosher pickles.

Women are Christmas control freaks

ANN
TRENEMAN

You see these men in the supermarkets... God knows what happens if they take home the wrong crackers

WH SMITH and *Family Circle* magazine have done a Christmas survey which says that someone called "the average female" will buy all the Christmas food and drink, write and send all the cards, buy and wrap all the presents and do the washing-up. The only contribution that men are likely to make, the survey says, is ferrying around relatives and carving the turkey.

About 4 per cent of men will write cards and/or wrap presents. In addition the cost of something called the "average family Christmas" is predicted to be £935, and the two celebrities most women would most like to have round for Christmas are Sir Cliff Richard and Delia Smith.

This survey is irritating for several reasons. The very idea of the "average female" is odd, the cost of almost £1,000 is too high and the belief that men can only sharpen a knife and call out "Honey, I'm home" is something out of a Sixties sitcom.

Finally, can it be true that anyone would really want Delia sitting at their table, patiently explaining exactly how to go about unfolding their serviettes ("Pick it up, off the table, off the table now...")?

Actually, I take that back, because it is clear that Adrian Rogers of the Family Institute might be mad enough to want this. He loves this survey and sees it as a nature/nurture thing: "A happy woman is often a home-maker, and there is nothing more fulfilling than making Christmas for her family. Men are hunter-gatherers, slouchers, cads and drunkards. But it works." Claire

Rayner says that the survey reflects an older generation but that "some older women have learned to love their chains".

This is tosh. Women may do a lot of extra work at Christmas, but they do it not out of love or because of some innate sense of home-making. They do it because they want to be in control. If you ever want to see a group of women go into anecdote overload, ask them whether they would allow their men to be completely in charge of any part of Christmas. By this I do not mean tell the men what to do and supervise them every step of the way. I mean have the men organise, prepare and complete any one task.

The main reaction to this is incredulity. Cards? "Oh my God, he'd never buy them/write the correct message/know who to send them to/find the addresses..." Tree? "Only if you want the wrong size/kind/ornaments/tinsel..." Dinner? "Well, the last time he came back with some After Eights and a bottle of wine. Christmas dinner is simply not a possibility..." Presents? "... Eyes roll round and round.

OK, then, wrap the presents? "What and have everyone get their gift in a carrier bag..."

This is why at Christmas lots of women think that the only good man is one who is carrying a list - and following it to the letter. You see these men in supermarkets, frantically looking from list to shelf just to quadruple-check that they are not making a mistake. God knows what happens to them if they come back with the wrong Christmas crackers but it's obviously pretty bad. They look terrified as they scurry from task to task. Hunter/gatherer indeed. More like a rabbit caught in the headlights.

This situation gets worse every year, because every year the myth of the perfect Christmas gets more elaborate. It used to be that we all wanted to recreate our childhood Christmas. Our blueprint was a family one. Now we take our lead from the media, which is happy to give us an ever higher mountain to climb. Open any women's magazine for proof. We need to make our own wreaths, create our own seasonal pot-pourri etc. The article in this month's *Family Circle* on "25 ways

to survive Christmas" actually creates 25 new things to worry about. It tells us the correct way to send cards, order the turkey, prepare the tree, entertain the children, obtain the hamper, order a log machine (yes, it's the kind of thing average families do, evidently).

Finally, there is this suggestion: "If you always forget anyway, give yourself the gift of Total Recall - a service that rings to remind you of 10 important birthdays and anniversaries a year. The deluxe version ensures that you are nagged every day leading up to the event." Just what we all want: a professional nag.

It is scary that some people might actually think this is a good idea and even a helpful one. But then most of us have bought the myth. We believe that there is a right way to celebrate Christmas and we believe that the only people capable of organising this properly are women. But it's not true. Men can do Christmas too. At least I think they can. OK, maybe they might need a few pointers. Or perhaps a list. Perhaps we should do the cards. And the tree. And the presents. But they can do the washing up. Can't they?

Wisdom doesn't change with the passing of the years

HUNTER
DAVIES

Almost all of the people I interviewed, all born in 1900, didn't think much of what we call progress

I AM about to become invisible. It hasn't quite happened yet, but hit by bit, step by step, year by year, I am ceasing to exist. On buses, on trains, in the street, people already walk passed as if I am not there. In queues, in shops, in restaurants, people look straight through me. Those who know me, know me. Are aware of my existence. But strangers are no longer seeing me.

When I come across groups, outside William Ellis school after my walk on Hampstead Heath, or catching up other football supporters on my way to White Hart Lane, they don't stand aside, don't move to let me through. I do not enter their consciousness. And why should I. At the age of 62, I am neither a threat, nor an attraction. I am not a force to be reckoned with.

The young and the young middle aged, male or female, are noticed. They are eyed up, fancied, liked, disliked, criticised, rated, graded, feared, or just noted. Never ignored. Someone out there has always registered their presence.

But with age, we all begin to fade. In every sense. In three years time, if and when I get to 65, I will probably have completely disappeared. That could be fun. I'll ring MI6 and offer to be a spy. One of the pluses of being over 60 is that if you look reasonably clean, appear reasonably civilised, you can walk in and out of anywhere. Because you are not seen, you are not stopped.

You can go into the postbox of hotels, use their facilities. Float past the security desk of a major company, have a meal or drink in their subsidised canteen. Oldies are not suspected. IFMIs, in their stupidity, have an age limit, and turn me down, then a hurglar. Burglaring could also be fun. We should all be prepared, so we are told, for career changes.

If, please God, I do get to 65,

though my knee is awfully sore today, and my arthritic toe is giving me gip, and I keep going to, say, 75, then 85, then 90, I could reach the age of 90. Something strange is then likely to happen. I will become invisible again.

Over the last two years, I have been talking to people aged 96, 97 and 98 for my book, *Born 1900* (Little Brown, £16.99). Remarkable, even today, to reach that great age, but even more remarkable to be fit and well, mentally and physically.

Most were in their own homes, usually with a son or daughter near by to keep an eye on them. Two were even driving their own cars. One was still working. They had survived two World Wars, seen many things. All of them had a presence.

My father-in-law, who had inspired the project, because he too had been born in 1900, never told people his age until he got to 90. From then on he boasted, as I would. He spoke his mind, told people off. In the nursing home, he would tell nurses they were getting fat, or had a spot on their chin, as if

they didn't know. They would laugh at his cheek, amused by him, tell others about him, and his age. He could get away with anything.

In his sixties, he'd probably become invisible. Now, in some ways, he was not just visible, but larger than he'd been in his life. He demanded, he was attended to, people were aware of him. He had become a character.

I'm looking forward to that. I have gone through life hardly ever giving offence, rarely speaking out, never having arguments, which of course is suitable and fitting for someone of my age now, about to disappear. If and when I re-emerge as a real Oldie, I hope to become a character - to be reckoned with.

On the other hand, I will probably start moaning about the Modern World, which I haven't done, so far. Almost all of the 25 I interviewed, born in 1900, didn't think much of what we like to consider progress. They didn't like the speed of life, the stresses, the traffic, our materialism, our greed, our lack of courtesies, our cruelty, our obsession with sex.

The latter particularly upset them. When I tried to get on to their own sex life, they refused to answer. A shame, really, but that was the age in which they lived, when such things were not discussed. I was surprised to find they had all come from large families, but went on to have small families. Just like the Queen Mother, also born in 1900. She was one of 10, but had only two children.

The average for my 25 was 1.6. Contraception was hardly known in the Twenties, when they were giving birth, so what did they do? "Withdraw," so one old bloke told me. Then he took it back, not wanting such a thing mentioned in the book.

They did admit modern medicine was a good thing, as several had had new hips and other bits, and yes, they



The Queen Mother is nearly a centenarian

Tom Pilkston

did enjoy the radio and TV. But apart from that, they could see little else in modern life which was a definite improvement. Cars, computers, Concorde, the Internet, have they really increased the sum of human happiness?

Human aspirations, so several explained, had stayed very much the same. We want to find a partner, be happy, have a roof over our heads, enough to eat, bring our children up decently. These are the concerns most people had in 1900, and will in 2000. Yes, all pretty obvious, but still pretty wise.

One of the women, Mary Ellis, once famous in films and on the West End stage, didn't even think our morals had got worse, not even

sexual morals. In every age, there are moral standards. They do change, but most people try, roughly, to follow those standards, whatever they are. And the proportion following them, or not following them, is probably much the same. Which means you should try not to condone or criticise standards from another age.

"People don't change," she said. "Only the music changes."

I had to think about that, but decided it was jolly wise, probably even true. I do hope I become wise, as well as visible, when I get into my nineties.

Independent Christmas Appeal for the elderly: Review, page 8

THE INDEPENDENT

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Families must play generation game

THIS PAPER explores grandparents' relative influence in family life. The findings indicate that the grandparents in the study were a valued source of assistance, particularly in their role as baby-sitters. However, while families expected grandparents to provide support, they were not to "interfere" in the lives of their children and grandchildren. All generations believed interference caused tension and impinged on the autonomy of the nuclear family. The findings indicate that the grandparent role requires careful negotiation to define expectations and parameters. Estimates indicate that 70 per cent of people in the United Kingdom become grandparents and that many remain in this role for around 25 years, or one third of their life span. This suggests that grandparenthood is an important part of family life both as a personal experience and because of its impact on others.

Recent research indicates that grandparents are in frequent contact with their children and grandchildren and that they act as important support agents within the

family. Earlier research took a more negative view, warning of the tendencies of grandparents to interfere in the upbringing of children, either by being too indulgent or too strict and old-fashioned. This highlights the fact that grandparents' involvement in family life is mediated by the intervening parent generation. Grandparents face a marginalised role within the family, as well as a role with poorly defined rights and duties.

The grandparents in the study were in frequent contact with their families, although time spent with grandchildren tended to decline as the children became teenagers. Grandparents played an active role in family life, and parents valued their help and advice, particularly for their role as baby-sitters. While such support was expected of grandparents, all three generations felt that they should not "interfere" in their children's and grandchildren's lives. This was particularly salient in relation to grandchildren's upbringing, where parents viewed rules and decisions as outside the grandparents' sphere of influences. For example, grand-



PODIUM

JILL TUNALEY
From a speech by a
University of Newcastle
lecturer to the
British Psychological
Society Conference

parents often disagreed with parents about the content of television programmes teenagers were allowed to watch or about the amount and the type of freedom teenagers were allowed outside the home. Attempts to impose these opinions on parents and grandchildren caused conflict within the family and were classed as "interference".

In order to avoid tension, both grandparents and parents

attempted to negotiate relationships which were mutually supportive but which provided the nuclear family with space and privacy. They described this in terms of not "living in each other's pockets".

Many grandparents viewed their marginal position in the family as positive because they were able to enjoy spending time with their grandchildren without having primary responsibility for them. "Not interfering" was the final part of the parenting process, giving adult children the freedom to make their own decisions and to raise their families in their own way.

Other grandparents avoided interfering because they did not want to be a "nuisance" or a burden to their families. This sentiment was particularly expressed by widowed grandparents (who were usually women), who had a greater sense of reliance on their families than those whose partners were still alive.

The concept of grandparental interference has implications for intergenerational relationships both now and in the future. Grandparents and parents must learn to balance

conflicting expectations regarding support versus interference and to negotiate these expectations within their families. Decreasing birth rates and smaller family size in Western societies mean that there are fewer members in each generation and so intergenerational family relationships may become more important.

Grandparents may have more time to devote to smaller numbers of grandchildren, but they will have to balance this with the expectation of non-interference. Increasing divorce rates are resulting in a greater variety and complexity of family relationships, including those of stepgrandchildren and stepgrandparents. This creates privacy issues.

The flexible but unpaid child care that many grandparents provide is likely to become increasingly valuable as more women with children choose to work outside the home. The challenge that will face families in the future will be to balance grandparents' involvement in a full-time childcare role with the maintenance of space and boundaries between generations.

And they called it peace



ROBERT FISK

Arafat has been emasculated, and has sacrificed any chance of bargaining over the Palestinian charter

THERE WAS a dreadful, telling moment during the latest Middle East theatricals, when President Clinton shared a Sunday press conference with Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister. The American President had urged the Palestinians to abandon those clauses in the Palestinian charter which call for the destruction of Israel. Already, Yasser Arafat had arranged the very show of hands which the Israelis and Americans had demanded. Then suddenly – without any prior warning – Mr Netanyahu produced a new “condition” which the Palestinians would have to meet if Israeli troops were to make a further scheduled withdrawal from occupied Arab land on Friday: Mr Arafat would have to publicly abandon any plan to declare a Palestinian state next May.

Mr Clinton was silent. His face mirrored not perplexity but hopelessness. He had just promised Israel that he would ask Congress to give it a further \$1.2bn to help Israel’s “security” during the final stages of the “peace process”. But he said nothing. If he realised amid his own personal crisis that the Israelis were torpedoing any hope of peace in the Middle East, he did not reveal it. The Israelis had simply produced one more “condition” which was supposedly included in the Wye agreement – itself a restatement of all the unfulfilled promises of the 1993 Oslo agreement – and the Americans went along with it. Then the Israelis said that Arafat must also halt all violent demonstrations. This too, we were told, was part of the Wye agreement.

It was nothing of the sort. There are no sentences, clauses or paragraphs in the Wye treaty which forbid Arafat from declaring a Palestinian state, any more than there are prohibitions on demonstrations, however violent. But Wye was so dishonest a document – so humiliatingly accepted by Arafat and his cronies – that it scarcely matters.

“You did a good thing today in raising your hands,” Clinton told the obedient members of the Palestine National Council who were merely reiterating what they had already said four years ago. No one asks anymore whether the conditions set by the Israelis are actually written into the Oslo or Wye agreements. “Palestinian compliance,” as Mr Netanyahu’s spokesman David Bar-Ilan puts it – note that word “compliance” – has become part of the rubric of this forlorn “peace process”.

Now Mr Netanyahu’s domestic political crisis is produced as a reason for Israel’s refusal to abide by the peace accords – as if it is quite normal for a nation-state to break solemn signed agreements with a third party when its prime minister has personal problems with his ministers. Israel



Peace-keeping in the occupied territories: Israeli soldiers and police wrestle to the ground a protesting Palestinian

Rula Halawani/Reuters

has long complained – and rightly – that peace treaties with Arab states might prove worthless if regimes changed and then chose to disavow the undertakings of their predecessors. But when Israel does just this, it is seen as a natural, if regrettable, course of events.

In reality, Arafat has now been emasculated. To keep America’s friendship and secure Israel’s next microscopic retreat, he has sacrificed any chance of bargaining over the Palestinian charter. He cannot allow Palestinians to demonstrate against the doomed “peace” process unless their protest turns violent. He cannot demand a Palestinian state. He cannot demand even a part of Jerusalem as his capital – Mr Netanyahu having stated (without a murmur of dissent from Mr Clinton) that Jerusalem is the “unified and eternal capital of Israel”. Arafat must arrest his own opponents with the assistance of the CIA.

So what of the Palestinian leader who has so shamefully accepted this totally one-sided agreement, who has smothered any aspiration to freedom and democracy in his putative “state”, whose cruel secret policemen now murder suspects on whim or – how symptomatic of their carelessness – by mistake. Egged on by the CIA experts who now measure his battle against “ter-

rorism”, the chairman of the Palestinian Authority has now turned his would-be state into a typical Middle East dictatorship.

He ignores his 88-member Palestinian Legislative Council. He pays no attention to the laws they have passed. He bans books (Edward Said, the distinguished Palestinian professor at Columbia University, is merely one of his latest victims). A poll taken by the Centre for Palestine Research and Studies suggests that Palestinians believe democracy and human rights are better respected in Israel than in “Palestine”. I still remember how Arafat boasted to me in Beirut in the dark days of the early 1980s that his nation was “a democracy among the guns”. But what he has created in the West Bank and Gaza Strip – those pathetic slivers that he would call a “state” – is a grotesque version of the gunman’s fiefdom which he ruled in Lebanon 20 years ago.

True, he is a deteriorating man. His brain tumour – following his air crash in Libya – has left him with a palpable shake in the right hand that looks suspiciously like the onset of Parkinson’s disease. He may not be so quick to shuffle off the mortal coil as other Arab leaders – the cancer-riven King Hussein of Jordan, they say, may be with us for only another two or three months – but Arafat let slip a remark last week that

in two years’ time, someone else may be Palestinian leader. Chosen, the cynics said at once, by the Israelis.

Yet what do Arafat’s opponents elsewhere in the Arab world have to offer? All the anti-peacekeepers of Palestine met in Damascus last weekend to condemn the vote of the Palestine National Council. But when delegates called for the setting up of a rival PLO, Nayef Hawatmeh of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine – the sanest of the anti-Arafat league – opposed the motion and called for further political action in the occupied territories. He was bowled down by infuriated Palestinian radicals shouting for “unity”.

So what are we left with after the latest deplorable charade in the Middle East? A powerless Clinton, to be sure, too frightened, too lacking in concentration to dare criticise Netanyahu or do more than say that Palestinians should “determine their own destiny on their own land”. Even if Netanyahu were to allow such a development – which he won’t – Arafat would never permit it. True, Clinton was the first American president to visit Palestinian-controlled land. But he originally intended to land Air Force One in Gaza. The moment the Israelis suggested this might imply statehood, the leader of the world’s only superpower meekly agreed to

fly in from Tel Aviv by helicopter. In a real battle of wits between equal partners, Arafat might have made a few Netanyahu-like conditions to the Israelis: no continuation of the “peace process” unless Israel renounced its exclusive claim to Jerusalem as a capital (which precludes next May’s final status talks as surely does a Palestinian declaration of a state); no more Jewish settlements on occupied Arab land in contravention of UN resolutions and international law; no more negotiations until Netanyahu ends Jewish settler attacks on Palestinians. But of course, Arafat would not do that – and America would not talk to him if he did.

So what was the surprise when Clinton, Arafat and Netanyahu ended their summit yesterday without any signs of the success proclaimed by the US government? Oslo and Wye destroyed any Palestinian hope for a just peace. Israel was allowed to build more Jewish settlements on Palestinian land, confiscate Palestinian identity papers, demolish Palestinian homes. And Arafat – for perhaps 14 per cent of the land of “Palestine” – had to promise to protect the Israelis who were building the settlements, confiscating the paper and demolishing the homes.

And they called it peace.

RIGHT OF REPLY

HUGH MORISON



The director general of the Scotch Whisky Association responds to our call for the end of duty-free shopping

LAST WEEK common sense overcame macho political posturing when European leaders recognised that their decision, taken seven years ago, to end EU duty-free was gravely damaging in the current economic climate.

The call for a review into the economic impact of abolition offers hope to the 140,000 people whose jobs are at risk – more than 1,000 in the UK. When the abolition decision was taken, it was anticipated that excise duties in Europe would be harmonised to a single market. However, today we have 15 member states each with its own tax regime, all of which discriminate against Scotch whisky and other spirits.

Duty-free is popular with travellers. It provides a valuable showcase for a wide range of prestige products. Contrary to *The Independent’s* editorial, it is not a subsidy by the non-travelling public, a point reinforced by the Government’s assessment that ending duty-free for alcoholic drinks would not increase excise receipts.

The European Commission says the greatest threat to Europe at present is unemployment. Yet they have made no assessment of the impact of abolishing duty-free, in spite of unanimous calls for a review by the European Parliament.

The commission has an alarmingly short timeframe in which to carry out the full and comprehensive study that is required. It is vital that any report be the result of an objective assessment.

Above all, if the commission truly believes that there is no place in a single market for duty-free, then it must not simply remove a popular and valuable trade, increasing social security costs across the EU. It must deliver a genuine single market in which there is no duty discrimination between alcoholic drinks.

Tunnel at end of the light

RUSSIA IS, to put it mildly, a confusing place. Never has it been so easy to be suffocated by such a surfeit of facts combined with such lack of clarity. In order to grasp the nature of the Russian beast, it may be simpler to keep your mind very short indeed.

For the old USSR, it is safe to stick with *The Russians*, Hedrick Smith’s superb chronicle and the best of a series of journalistic accounts that explored all the vivid contradictions of the Brezhnevite superpower. The union’s collapse was represented by an equally brilliant book – *Lenin’s Tomb*, by David Remnick, the former Moscow correspondent of *The Washington Post* and now editor of *The New Yorker*. I wrote a well-received book on the same period, with some overlapping material, but it is not half as powerful as Remnick’s vibrant analysis-cum-reportage. *Lenin’s Tomb* deservedly won the Pulitzer Prize.



WEDNESDAY BOOK

RESURRECTION: THE STRUGGLE FOR A NEW RUSSIA
BY DAVID REMNICK, PICADOR, £20

As for the third act of the drama – the post-Soviet fallout, with all its implications – there have been various attempts to pull the literary sword from the stone. Many of these books have been enlightened and interesting – on crime, the economy, the nationalists or Kremlin power-plays. But none has had the must-read quality of *The Russians* or *Lenin’s Tomb*. The acknowledged successor to those two titles remains a sit vac. But Remnick has attempted to fill the gap himself, in a follow-up with the Tolstoyan title of *Resurrection*. Sequels are a notoriously dangerous

business. Hedrick Smith himself tried it, with a Gorbachev-era book called *The New Russians*. The general consensus was not a patch on volume one. But Remnick is a skilled navigator in tricky waters. He is admirably wary of conspiracy theories, while providing detailed behind-the-scenes accounts of key moments in recent Russian history.

Above all, what brings *Resurrection* alive is Remnick’s ability to illuminate the broader picture with individual tableaux. He gives devastating examples of the reasons to be pessimistic: insider detail on the vodka-driven madness of Yeltsin’s policy-making, especially on Chechnya; the burgeoning crime and violence; the grotesque contrasts between stinking rich and dirt poor.

He does not, however, fall into the common trap of believing that each of these truths automatically makes up the whole truth. As he notes, many Russians “mistake transition and change for apocalypse. The older the man or woman, the more likely it is that they suffer from anti-euphoria”. Younger generations, by contrast, foresee at least the possibility of change.

Remnick is not an out-and-out optimist: “The creation of capitalism on the ash-heap of history has not been a pretty sight.” But he points out that the absolute pessimists are also sometimes unrealistic. The failed coup of 1991 “so accelerated our notion of Russian history that expectations became outlandish; and now that many of those expectations have been disappointed, deferred and even betrayed, it seems as if we have gone back to expecting only the worst from Russia.”

Times have really changed, he argues. “Russia has entered the world, and everything, even freedom, is now possible.” The afterword was written before the Russian economic crisis this summer. Reality may, therefore, appear to have made his more upbeat predictions seem outdated.

Yet what is most striking about conversations with young Russians today is how few of them contemplate, even for a moment, a return to the comfortable certainties of their parents and grandparents’ years. Remnick concludes: “If business can advance in a way that begins to benefit more than a few Moscow tycoons, if Yeltsin finally fades away in a peaceful transition of power, then Russia will move further down the road toward becoming what so many of its people have hoped for so long: to be part of the world, to be a normal country.” That may seem a long line of big ifs – but a lot of big ifs have become real in recent years.

As a coda to *Resurrection*, the new issue of *Granta (Russia: The Wild East, Penguin, £7.99)* is a mosaic of pieces about the country’s disturbed legacy. There are testimonies from the land of the Gulag, a Chechen mother’s search for her son, Colin Thubron with pilgrims and scientists in Siberia, Vitali Vitaliev on vodka, Orlando Figes on reburying the tsar. It is full of unsettling one-liners, as in the reminiscences of a Gulag official: “Life in Norilsk was better than anywhere else in the Soviet Union. In the first place, all the bosses had maids, prisoner maids. Then the food was amazing.” And the prisoners? “They did not bother anyone – they just worked and worked. They were slaves.”

For Andrei Cheburkin, that was normality. He sounds slightly surprised that anybody might see things differently. At the end of the collection, you are left with a lingering sense of wistfulness, and endless confusion – in short, a fitting Russian epitaph.

STEVE CRAWSHAW

WEDNESDAY POEM

SUSPICION OF REPORTERS
BY KEN SMITH

Help she was howling over and over,
a long call in fire and be:
be was scribbling help me
I’m burning, his mind’s eye

setting angle, speed, distance,
closing the shutter, the bright
ring of strangeness around things
forming the frame of her burning.

He wrote *Nor could I save her*,
be that was chronicler, eye
of events at their centre. As she
in her death was, as this is.

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Alla Shelest

ALLA SHELEST was a very rare dancer, sensitive and delicate. A star of the Kirov Ballet during the Forties and Fifties, she possessed the gift of being able to live the role she was portraying, and she was blessed with a physical grace and allure that was utterly captivating.

Alla Yakovlevna Shelest was born in 1919, at Smolensk. A favourite pupil of Yeliseveta Gerdt who taught her from the age of 15, she later came under the influence of Agripina Vaganova. Graduating from the Leningrad Choreographic Academy in 1937, she was immediately accepted into the Kirov Ballet, with whom she danced solo roles from the beginning. In fact, she was dancing leading roles even before graduating. Her first big part was in Leonid Lavrovsky's *Katrina* (Rubinstein). There followed other important parts in Boris Fenster's *Maskarade* (Laputa) and Vakhtang Chaboukiani's *Othello* (Machavariani).

Her brilliant career developed spasmodically, with a plan for heroic roles from Russian literature, for which her histrionic gifts ideally equipped her. The maestro Fyodor Lopokov described her as "a heroic ballerina in the romantic mould, whose deep emotional powers could draw like a magnet". At the same time he considered her one of the most unlucky ballerinas of his experience. She was frequently dogged by misfortune, ill-health and breakdowns. Her first husband was Yuri Grigorovich; her second was a musician from Moldavia. Throughout her career she was confronted with fierce opposition, yet, despite the setbacks and frustrations, she enjoyed remarkable periods of ecstatic acclaim. Such was her local fame that audiences queued for days when the news was leaked that she would dance.

Shelest cultivated an effortless classical technique; yet she was not confined to the classical repertoire. In such ballets as Mikhail Fokine's *Egyptian Nights* (Arenska), in which she was Cleopatra, or as Zaremka in Rodislav Zakharov's *Fountain of Balchik* (Asafiev), as Simbik in Leonid Jacobson's *Shuruli* (Yarulin), or in Boris Aifman's *Guyana* (Khachaturian) she brought to her portrayals an Eastern exoticism that was ravishing.



Audiences queued for days to watch her dance. Fyodor Lopokov called her 'a heroic ballerina in the romantic mould', albeit a most unlucky one

Her repertoire was vast and diverse, and her flawless technique, musicality and perfection of line brought matchless renderings of the classics: Odette-Odile in *Swan Lake*, the Lilac Fairy in *Sleeping Beauty*, both Giselle and Myrtha in *Giselle*, *Raymonda*, *Nikia* in *La Bayadere*, *Street Dancer* in *Don Quixote*, and *Princess* in *The Little Hunch-backed Horse*. She danced the entire repertoire, including *Le Corsair*, *The Bronze Horseman*.

Flames of Paris, *Stone Flower*, and *Cinderella*. The list is endless, but by some quirk of fate, she was most often second, third or fourth cast, thus missing the *réclame* of first-night success; furthermore, she was not included in the Kirov tours abroad, and was consequently deprived of a certain international recognition.

Before the curbs restricted her fame, and her freedom to travel, she made some appearances in London during the early Fifties. She danced a *pas de deux* at the Empress Hall, during a political convention, and gave some concert performances at the Scala Theatre and Festival Hall. I had the good fortune to see her dance excerpts from *Giselle* and *Romeo and Juliet* and was enchanted by her expressive eloquence. She was frailer than Galina Ulanova, yet in some measure she had similar qualities.

At one period she appeared in Jacobson's *Choreographic Miniatures*, dancing in *Eternal Idol*, and a ballet based on Rodin's *The Kiss*. One of her most poignant creations was *The Blind Girl*, which only she could dance. If she was sometimes distressed by the intrigues that held her in thrall, she was also uplifted by the plaudits of celebrated colleagues. Vaganova called her "a talented ballerina-actress". Tatiana Vecheslova a leading ballerina said: "She is the biggest artist of our time."

The supreme Ulanova, 10 years her senior, wrote of her: "She has a huge inner culture; she is a ballerina of tragedy and inspiration. For me she brings a new tract to every role she attempts."

Valeri Panov, who partnered Shelest in some concert performances in Moscow in 1962, wrote this:

Despite her age and mannerisms Shelest immediately showed her powerful, intensely personal vision, that rarest ballet gift. If the circumstances had been right for her, she would have been even more important, to the degree that she was more profound in every role, than Ulanova. A strong individualist in her art and personal life, she would not take her "proper" place in the Kirov's magnificent scheme of things. She was a dramatic force upon whom a whole generation of ballerinas, including Maya Plisetskaya, modelled themselves.

In 1953 she became an Honoured Artist of the USSR; in 1957 Peoples' Artist; and in 1947 and 1951 she was



Shelest as Nikia in *La Bayadere*

nominated for a State Laureateship. From 1967 to 1976 she was Ballet Mistress at Khabarovsk, and, after further travels, she taught at the Leningrad Choreographic Academy and at the Conservatory. It was said, however, that teaching was not her *métier*; she was too introverted, too individual.

I met her for the last time in the spring of 1992, when we sat together on a jury at the Diaghilev Contest for Young Dancers, held at the

Tchaikovsky Salle in Moscow. By now she was frail and had recently suffered a stroke, but was still active and full of enthusiasm. She was delighted when I recalled my memories of her glorious dancing of 40 years before when she appeared in London. That I remembered her so vividly after so many years brought a spasm of joy to her sad face.

She was a goddess of the dance who did not receive all that was her due. However, in the annals of the St Petersburg dance scene her unique gifts will never be forgotten.

JOHN GREGORY

Alla Yakovlevna Shelest, dancer, choreographer and dance director; born Smolensk, Russia 26 February 1919; twice married; died St Petersburg 7 December 1998

• John Gregory died 27 October 1996

Nigel Kent-Lemon

NIGEL KENT-LEMON was the outstanding analyst of casino gambling in Britain, with an international reputation for good judgement and independent thinking. In style, he was quiet, humorous and always unassuming, despite an encyclopaedic knowledge of gambling and all the personalities who ran it, world-wide.

His expertise extended beyond casinos, where he had first-hand experience as managing director of Coral's operation in London and later formed his own casino group, City Clubs Limited, which included Maxim's in Kensington, London. He was also closely involved in horse-racing. From 1991 he was chairman of Lingfield Park racecourse in Surrey, and was an enthusiastic supporter of Sunday and all-weather racing. He was thrilled to be invited earlier this year to join the Tote Board, where he saw an opportunity of helping the sport he knew from the inside.

Kent-Lemon was not at all typical of the casino owners and managers he knew so well. He trained as an accountant, but he became fascinated by the network of economic enterprise which casinos represent in the modern world.

He spent a period in management consultancy before joining Coral's Casinos in 1973, aged 27. He set up a chain of provincial casinos, in Bournemouth, Plymouth, Manchester, Liverpool and Brighton. In 1978 he became deputy managing director of Coral's London casino operation, with responsibility for two of the most celebrated casinos in Mayfair, Crockford's and the Palm Beach.

When most of the Coral casinos were acquired by Lomro in 1980, Kent-Lemon left to start his own consultancy, N.K.L. Services Limited. So many people in the gaming industry in Britain and abroad sought his advice that this project proved almost too successful, in terms of the amount of work he had to put in. In my experience as a journalist, I found his judgements, without exception, correct.

Although he wrote sparingly he made regular contributions to the international conferences organised by the University of Nevada. In Britain he was an active member of the Society for the Study of Gambling.

In 1990 Kent-Lemon ventured into casinos on his own account, as chairman of City Clubs Limited, which bought Maxim's and later purchased two other London casinos, Chester's in Soho and the Golden Horseshoe in Queensway. At Maxim's he was witty amidst the extravagant style of the late Robert Maxwell, who made a great noise and liked to play two roulette tables at the same time.

During the course of Kent-Lemon's management, these three casinos were remodelled and enhanced. As a result the original investment of £24m was realised for £50m when they were sold to Ladbroke's in September 1994.

He travelled widely to consult on casino projects and frequently visited the United States, where he served as co-chairman of the Institute of the Study of Gambling and Commercial Gaming in Reno and was a visiting senior lecturer in Gaming Management at the University of Nevada.

His flair for public speaking combined with his open-minded and well-informed background made him a popular speaker and lecturer. Whenever the initials N.K.L. were listed at a conference or seminar, the audience knew it was in for a master-class.

Through his support of GamCare, a charity formed to help problem gamblers in Britain, he also took a lead in encouraging the gaming industry to accept a measure of responsibility on the social welfare side of the business.

Above all, in a semi-academic role, he made an invaluable contribution in helping to train up-and-coming recruits to the industry. He believed that raising the standard of management in the casino industry was the key to its future success. He made a start on this work as chairman of the Centre for the Study of Gambling at Salford University, which opened in 1995.

Though in his working life Kent-Lemon studied the green baize of the gaming tables, in his private life he liked the greensward of the country, in pursuits such as shooting and stalking, and also golf. He was blessed with a happy marriage. Despite his unexpected heart trouble, he felt that he had been privileged to lead a full life and had done everything he wanted. His only wish was to see his two teenage sons grow up.

DAVID SPANIER

Nigel William Kent-Lemon, casino consultant; born Southborough, Kent 12 October 1946; married Zaida Dobbs (two sons); died Hatfield, Middlesex 11 December 1998.

Sir David Woodbine Parish

DAVID WOODBINE Parish would introduce himself to strangers with "I am a builder; my wife is an architect, but I am a builder". Both literally and metaphorically, this statement was true. He was a practical, working member of the building industry, and beyond this he was a builder of opportunities of doing good to others. He was a well-known figure in the City of London for more than 40 years - his involvement there and beyond many-faceted. His charitable service extended to technical education including medical education, to hospitals, to the welfare of the elderly, and to church music.

Woodbine Parish saw his wide-spread voluntary activities as a way of acknowledging and returning thanks for his privileged background and upbringing. He was properly proud of his descent from Sir Woodbine Parish, Knight Commander of the Order of Hanover - a diplomat who claimed sovereignty of the Falkland Islands for Britain - and of his education at Eton; and he never shirked in what he knew to be his duty to those less fortunate than he.

His career in the building industry began at Holliday and Greenwood, following a two-year period of training in textile and related engineering. He became a director in 1937 and chairman and managing director from 1953. In 1959 Woodbine Parish was appointed chairman of



Bovis Limited. His retirement in 1966 allowed an expanded participation in charitable activities.

His sense of responsibility was nurtured through membership of the Worshipful Company of Clothworkers, 13th of the Great Twelve Livery Companies of the City of London, in which he served as a Warden, 1962-64, and as Master, 1974-75. The Clothworkers' Company was one of the original Founder Members, in 1878, of the City and Guilds of London Institute for the Advancement of Technical Education (now better known as City and Guilds). Through this connection, and because of his direct knowledge and experience of the building industry, Woodbine

Parish was appointed to the Council of the institute in 1954.

One of his earliest contributions to the institute was to provide it with a new home. It was then housed in two rooms at Gresham College; the lease was due to expire in 1958. Woodbine Parish, as chairman of Holliday and Greenwood and Joint Honorary Secretary of the City and Guilds from 1957, supervised the design and construction of the new headquarters in Portland Place. The foundation stone was laid in February 1958.

Woodbine Parish's contribution to education and training was extensive; he served on the board of the Construction Industry Training Board from 1964-70, chaired the

Woodbine Parish saw his wide-ranging voluntary activities as a way of returning thanks for his privileged background and upbringing

UK National Committee of the International Apprentice Competition, 1962-70 and was a member of the National Examinations Board for Supervisory Studies. To everything to which he set himself, Woodbine Parish committed himself wholeheartedly: he had been known to shed tears of effort and frustration in pursuit of a cherished objective.

He was Chairman of the City and Guilds for 12 years from 1967 - his chairmanship in the Centenary Year, with the associated celebrations, gave him particular pleasure. On retirement in 1979, he was appointed Life Vice-President by the Duke of Edinburgh, President of the City and Guilds, in recognition of his years of dedication and hard work - the only such appointment in 101 years.

From the 1950s to the 1980s there was hardly a body concerned with management and technological education, the development of institutions of higher education, and of hospitals and medical schools, in the City and Greater London, in which Woodbine Parish did not play a significant part. In particular he had a long association with St Thomas' Hospital, serving as Vice-Chairman of the Board from 1967 until 1974, and ensured the construction of a new outpatients' building during his eight years as chairman of the Rebuilding Committee. He also chaired the Council of the Medical School from 1970 to 1982.

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The published record of his participation is long and honourable, but it cannot show the invaluable support which he gave behind the scenes to government and local government. Bringing together his building knowledge and medical experience, he chaired the Department of Health and Social Security Committee of Enquiry on Hospital Building Maintenance, in 1968-70. In March 1972 he advised Margaret Thatcher (then Secretary of State for Education) in the negotiations leading up to the establishment of the Technician and Business Education Councils.

He was appointed CBE for his public services in 1964 and knighted in 1980. His contributions to the management of such a wide range of institutions were also recognised in the award of numerous fellowships and honorary degrees.

Woodbine Parish married Mona McGarel Johnston in 1939. Together they built their country home, the Glebe Barn, in Pulborough, West Sussex, where they were idyllically happy.

David Woodbine Parish was a punctilious about there being no hyphen between his surnames and he disliked and ignored his second baptismal name of Elmer - set the highest standards of conduct; of dress; and in the presentations of papers. He found casual manners distasteful and an embarrassment. On

City occasions he was invariably immaculate in short black coat, waistcoat, and striped trousers: his buttonhole often sported a rose or carnation from his own garden. His system for colour-coded highlighting of documents as an aid to speedy mastery of their contents will long be remembered by those in the Secretary's office at City and Guilds. It was always an unspoken regret that an affliction of the feet prevented him from military service in 1939-45.

PETER STEVENS

David Elmer Woodbine Parish, builder, businessman and philanthropist; born London 29 June 1911; director, Holliday and Greenwood 1937-59, chairman and managing director 1953-59; chairman, Bovis 1959-66; CBE 1964; Chairman, City and Guilds of London Institute 1967-79, Life Vice-President 1979-98; Vice-Chairman, Board of Governors, St Thomas' Hospital 1967-74; Chairman, Council, St Thomas' Hospital Medical School 1970-82; director, Marine and General Mutual Life Assurance Society 1971-86, deputy chairman 1976-86; Chairman, Joint Mission Hospital Equipment Board 1973-75; KT 1980; Chairman, Sussex Area, Royal School of Church Music 1981-85; married 1939 Mona McGarel Johnston (died 1991); two daughters; died Pulborough, West Sussex 12 November 1998.

Boris Chernobilsky

THE WORD *refusenik*, a Soviet Jew refused permission to emigrate to Israel, entered the English dictionary in 1976, coincidentally the year Boris Chernobilsky first entered prison. This was due largely to the exploits of Anatoly (Natan) Shcharansky, now leader of Israel's Yisrael ha-Aliya party. Yuli Edelstein, now Israel's Absorption Minister, and Chernobilsky, who has died while swimming off an Israeli beach.

That he reached Israel at all was down to dogged persistence, coupled with copious chutzpah, in the face of a quite appalling catalogue of state-sponsored harassment. Born and educated in Moscow, Chernobilsky graduated as a radio/electronics engineer. His knowledge of radar technology, acquired during his national service in the Soviet army in the mid-Sixties, was considered by the authorities more than a decade

later as reason enough to deny Chernobilsky, his wife Leah, and their three children an exit visa for a new life in Israel. The charge, as always in the land of paranoia, was one of "being in possession of secret information", the all-embracing reason for holding on to even the most reluctant and innocuous citizens.

This determined the Chernobilskys all the more to embrace their heritage and their Jewish knowledge and they turned their tiny Moscow apartment into a Jewish school, teaching first themselves, then countless other refuseniks, Hebrew in readiness for the day they would all reach Israel. In all, Chernobilsky's efforts contributed to thousands of would-be Jewish émigrés achieving their dreams of a new life in Israel.

To involve yourself in any way with the Hebrew language in the Soviet Union of the 1970s and 1980s was

to incur the wrath of the authorities, who regarded the learning and teaching of Hebrew as, if not illegal, then certainly a deeply subversive activity. This was anti-Semitism in a family dressing. They subjected the family to a systematic reign of terror, with regular beatings and temporary prison detention, culminating for Chernobilsky in a year in a Siberian labour camp on trumped-up charges of "malicious hooliganism", the Soviet euphemism for "peaceful demonstration". He also secretly travelled to the Gulag, taking film of prison-camp life, which alerted the West to what was happening.

Active campaigning from the West, not least the intervention of Kenneth Baker, then Education Secretary, won the Chernobilskys some respite from their harassment. First their daughter Geula was allowed to

leave her state school, where pupils and staff alike would taunt her for being the child of a "traitor". In favour of Moscow's Anglo-American School, then Chernobilsky was granted a temporary visa to accept, at the House of Lords, the Henry Moore Award of the All-Party Parliamentary Committee for Soviet Jewry.

Shortly after, and close on 15 years after they first applied, the Chernobilskys received their exit visas and left for Israel, grateful to John Major and Sir Geoffrey Howe, then Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary, for their assistance in securing safe passage.

Chernobilsky, always endearing, ever resourceful, and never one to conform, did not arrive in Israel the way others did. Using what little money he had garnered from the sale of his possessions, primarily his

much-prized computer, he became one of the few Muscovite Volvo owners, driving the car, his family, and what little else they had across no fewer than nine borders before arriving in Haifa, to the bemusement of the transit authorities for whom this was a first. A refusenik arriving by car was a radical departure from the norm, even in a country where nothing is done by halves.

Despite all the right credentials, no less so than Shcharansky and Edelstein, Chernobilsky eschewed Israel's political life, indeed the limelight in general, preferring instead to fall back on his electrical skills from which he eked a modest existence, living a happy, quiet life close to the sea which ultimately claimed him.

His spare time, when not bathing in the Mediterranean, was given largely to assisting those Soviet im-



Volvo refusenik

migrants less well placed than himself.

PETER MOSS

Boris Chernobilsky, electrician, teacher and human rights activist; born Moscow 2 April 1944; married Zaida Dobbs (two daughters); died Ashkelon, Israel 16 October 1998.

DAY REVIEW
December 1998

هكذا من الامل

Professor Peter Daniel

SUCCESS in scientific research often results from beaver away at an ever-narrowing strip of knowledge. This was not Peter Daniel's way: his was an 18th-century polymath's enthusiasm for an extraordinary range of subjects in medical science. Indeed, he was made a Fellow of four royal colleges on the strength of his published work.

He was born in 1910 in London, where his father was Senior Surgeon at Charing Cross Hospital. After a rather quirky education at Westminster School, Cambridge, Oxford, Edinburgh, and Charing Cross Medical School (through idleness he was expelled from two of these), he qualified in medicine at the age of 30.

He began as a pathologist at the Radcliffe Infirmary in Oxford and then as a neuropathologist to Sir Hugh Cairns, Professor of Neurosurgery at Oxford. Daniel became an astute diagnostician of brain tumours and nervous system diseases and established regular brain-cuts, always well attended by pathologists and clinicians at which post-mortem specimens were discussed. He ran these events with humour and erudition until he retired.

In the evenings and weekends, he followed other interests. With Marjorie Prichard he studied the control of blood flow to the kidney, which had important clinical implications. This work was published in 1947 as *Studies of the Renal Circulation*, immediately repudiated by other workers, and it was some years before American research rediscovered the observations.

Indeed, one of the threads running through Daniel's work was his interest in the anatomy and physiology of the minutest blood vessels of various organs. He had remarkable surgical skills which enabled him to inject very small blood vessels, making them solid and photogenic. His studies on the vascular connection between the brain and the pituitary gland proved fundamental to many research projects. This work was drawn together in a monograph in 1975 (*Studies of the Hypothalamus and the Pituitary Gland*), with Marjorie Prichard, of which he was particularly proud. Much of this work was carried out in the Oxford Observatory - the beautiful 18th-century building which is now Green College.

In 1957 Daniel was appointed to the chair of Neuropathology at the Institute of Psychiatry in London. He was a good chief, always available (he did not like travelling abroad), very generous and good at getting grants. There were departmental expeditions, for instance to the London Zoo to take the brain and eye muscles of an elephant that had died there. This brain and skull were shown to the Queen Mother at the opening of the new building of the Institute of Psychiatry. The picture appeared in the local paper with the caption, "The Queen Mother, discussing the patients' food with the head cook".

Daniel became interested in scrapie, a fatal disease of sheep of a then unknown cause, which eventually turned out to be a brain disease - a spongiform encephalopathy. With Elizabeth Beck he



Daniel in 1968, showing the Queen Mother a slice of elephant skull from London Zoo

showed that the brain changes were similar to those in Kuru, a disease affecting the natives of New Guinea, probably transmitted through cannibalism, and to Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (CJD).

Major experimental work on these diseases was carried out by Carlton Gadjuck and his team in the United States, but the work of Beck and Daniel was crucial in proving that these conditions could be transmitted, within and across species. The "agent" was unlike any

the brain, muscles and liver - work which demanded much skill as well as thought. He also contributed to neuropathology, particularly to the study of head injuries and tuberculous meningitis (Oxford was the first centre to treat this then incurable disease with streptomycin).

He inspired affection and loyalty - not from absolutely everyone - and demanded high standards for both published work and material presented to learned societies. Many important pa-

the Harveian Society. His second favourite institution was the Physiological Society, of which he became President and was elected a life member.

After he retired from the Institute of Psychiatry he was given bench space at the Royal College of Surgeons and St Thomas' Hospital, but without colleagues and a department he did not thrive. Around his 80th birthday, after a series of illnesses, he lost his joie de vivre and took to his bed. He was cared for devotedly in the last years by his wife Marion. He had always been busy - the discovery that this was no longer possible deeply upset him. Peter Daniel was a person who brought remarkable gifts to the world: many will be saddened by his death.

JOHN HENDERSON
AND SABINA STRICH

Peter Maxwell Daniel, neuropathologist and physiologist; born London 14 November 1910; Honorary Consultant Pathologist, Radcliffe Infirmary, Oxford 1948-56; Senior Research Officer, Oxford University 1949-56; Honorary Consultant in Neuropathology to the Army at Home 1952-77; Professor of Neuropathology, London University, at the Institute of Psychiatry, Maudsley Hospital 1957-76 (Emeritus); married first Sally Shelford (two sons, three daughters; marriage dissolved), second Dawn Bosanquet (one son; marriage dissolved), third Marion Bosanquet; died London 19 November 1998.

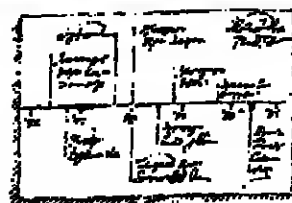
His favourite place on the planet was the Garrick Club. His second favourite institution was the Physiological Society, of which he became President

other infectious agent then known. This was some 15-20 years before BSE (the bovine form of spongiform encephalopathy) appeared in Britain.

Even after moving to London Daniel continued to do physiological and anatomical work with Professor David Whitteridge in Oxford, on the sense organs of the muscles that move the eye. There were other interests: he was one of the first to describe the regeneration of neurones in the central nervous system; he wrote on the secretion of hormones (especially thyroid hormones and insulin), and on the transport of amino acids into

pers came out of his departments in both Oxford and London.

Daniel was the best of company and a remarkable conversationalist. He could always produce some original - often scurrilous - slant on any subject. His favourite place on the planet was the Garrick Club; there he seemed not only to know everybody, but was often arranging something for someone. Sometimes this was medical advice, for he knew an extraordinary number of doctors. He had been President of the Neuropathological Society, the Osler Club, the Medical Society of London and



HISTORICAL NOTES

SAUL DAVID

A homicidal snob with too few brains

THE SEVENTH Earl of Cardigan will forever be remembered as the man who led the disastrous Charge of the Light Brigade at Balaclava in October 1854. Thanks to a misunderstood order, 676 riders were sent to attack a Russian battery at the end of a valley bounded on three sides by enemy troops. When the bloodied remnants formed up near the same ground they had charged from 25 minutes earlier, only 195 men were still mounted.

Cardigan was lucky. He suffered only a superficial wound and returned home to a rapturous welcome, cheered in the streets, lionised by society and decorated by the Queen. Pictures of him appeared in shops everywhere: music halls reverberated to heroic ballads in his honour, and even the novel jacket that he had worn in the Crimea was named after him.

It was all a far cry from his departure, eight months earlier, as one of the most unpopular men in England. Since then the war had degenerated into a costly and controversial stalemate; little wonder that the members of the Light Brigade were held up as shining examples of British valour. And none more so than their vaunted leader, Lord Cardigan. The scandal and disgrace that had hitherto dogged his career - two courts-martial, two court appearances for

adultery, a near-fatal duel, dismissal from the command of a crack cavalry regiment, blackballed by the leading military club, debates in Parliament about his conduct - were now a distant memory. But did his actions at Balaclava merit such adulation?

The first seeds of doubt were sown in the public mind by the 1855 publication of George Ryan's pamphlet *Was Lord Cardigan a Hero at Balaclava?* A jobbing writer, Ryan had earlier praised Cardigan for his conduct at the charge; he now explained his volte-face by saying that he had been put straight by an official at the Horse Guards who had heard at first hand from a number of officers involved. Ryan's main criticism was that Cardigan had retreated from the Russian battery "before his time" and in a far from orderly manner. In other words, he had left his men in the lurch.

An even more serious threat to Cardigan's status as national hero was posed by the appearance in December 1856 of a book entitled *Letters from Headquarters* by Major the Hon Somerset Calthorpe, who had served in the Crimea. It made a number of harmful claims, the most serious of which was that Cardigan did not even reach the Russian battery; instead "his horse took fright" when a cannon fired "and galloped off with him to the rear".

Fortunately for Cardigan, genuine criticisms were

mixed up with half-truths, enabling him to refute them en bloc. Nevertheless, Calthorpe would only agree to make minor alterations to the text, prompting Cardigan to sue him for libel. It was a grave error. At the trial, Calthorpe was forced to concede that Cardigan had indeed entered the battery; but he also produced evidence from seven eye-witnesses who claimed to have seen Cardigan galloping to the rear before they had even reached the guns. It was akin to a naval captain abandoning his ship before the last of his men had got off. The case was dismissed and the impression that Cardigan had retreated prematurely was never dispelled.

The popular image of Cardigan today is of the archetypal early-Victorian army officer: an arrogant, homicidal snob with too much money and too few brains, as likely to be found aboard a woman as a horse. Like all caricatures, it is a distortion of the truth, but based on fact none the less. The Charge of the Light Brigade was a heaven-sent opportunity for Cardigan to put the controversy of his life behind him. Instead, his conduct generated yet more controversy, and ensured that his rehabilitation in the minds of the public would never be complete.

Saul David is the author of *The Homicidal Earl: the Life of Lord Cardigan* (Abacus, £10.99)

Tariff for indecent assault disapproved

R v Demel [1997] 2 Cr App R (S) 5 should no longer be regarded as a reliable guide to the level of tariff currently appropriate in cases of indecent assault.

The Court of Appeal dismissed the appellant's appeal against a sentence of two years' imprisonment imposed for indecent assault on a female.

The appellant, who was aged 58, indecently assaulted a 13-year-old schoolfriend of his 14-year-old daughter who had come to spend the night at his home. The appellant had supplied both girls with a considerable amount of alcohol and had assaulted the victim after she had gone to bed. She had leapt from the bed, collected her belongings, run to the bathroom, dressed and climbed out of the window. She had then run home, arriving just after midnight, and her parents had called the police.

Helen McCormack (Registrar of Criminal Appeals) for the appellant.

Lord Justice Rose VP said that counsel had relied on the case of *R v Demel* [1997] 2 Cr App R (S) 5. In that case the court had reduced from two years to 18 months a sentence passed upon a priest for a single offence of indecent assault on a 10-year-old girl. Counsel stressed that the breach of trust in that case could hardly have been greater.

The court had drawn counsel's attention to a subsequent unreported decision of the Court of Appeal, namely *R v Lennon* (7 April 1998), in the light of which she accepted that certain of the observations in *R v Demel* could no

WEDNESDAY LAW REPORT

16 DECEMBER 1998

Regina v W
Court of Appeal, Criminal Division (Lord Justice Rose, Vice-President, Mr Justice Rousier and Mr Justice Johnson)
10 December 1998

longer be relied upon as far as the tariff for such offences of indecent assault was concerned. She relied, none the less, upon the facts of *R v Demel* as being more serious than those in the present case.

The tariff referred to in *R v Demel* was between 13 and 18 months' imprisonment on a plea of guilty where there had been a breach of trust. In delivering the reserved judgment of the court in *R v Lennon* Henry LJ had analysed each of the authorities on which the court had relied in *R v Demel* as establishing the tariff there referred to.

R v Vinson (1981) 3 Cr App R (S) 315 was decided when the maximum penalty for indecent assault on a woman was two years. *R v Smith* (1986) 8 Cr App R (S) 325 was decided in October 1986, after section 3(3) of the Sexual Offences Act 1985 had, with effect from 1 September 1985, increased that maximum to 10 years, but the offences had been committed in 1984. In 1984, even in respect of girls under 13, the maximum sentence was still only five years.

In *R v Gibbons* (1987) 9 Cr App R (S) 391 the court had relied on *R v Vinson* and *R v Smith* as being "equally applicable today", a conclusion which, with respect, their lordships found mystifying. Parliament having increased the maximum sentence since those cases were decided.

In *R v Moghal* (1992) 14 Cr App R (S) 126 the court relied on *R v Vinson*, apparently oblivious to the intervening statutory change. In *R v Aston* (1993) 14 Cr App R (S) 779, where *R v Vinson* and *R v Moghal* were considered, the offences were indecency with a child, not indecent assault.

In *R v Lennon* Henry LJ had said of those authorities that they "cannot, when read in the light of the statutory framework in force at the material time, be said to provide a tariff sentence bracket at the level referred to in them". To that extent their lordships respectfully disagreed with *R v Demel*. The conclusion in *R v Lennon* and the analysis in which it was based were correct. *R v Demel* should not, in the view of the court, be regarded as a reliable guide to the level of tariff currently appropriate in cases of indecent assault.

Furthermore, as the circumstances of indecent assault varied infinitely, the range of possible sentences was a good deal wider than *R v Demel* suggested.

In the light of the above and in all the circumstances of the present case, the sentence could not be regarded as excessive.

KATE O'HANLON
Barrister

GAZETTE

BIRTHDAYS

Mr Benny Andersson, singer with Abba, 52; Miss Anne Begg MP, 43; Mr Michael Blackburn, chief executive, Halifax Building Society, 57; Mr Norman Blamey, painter, 84; Sir Michael Carlisle, Chairman, Community Health Sheffield NHS Trust, 69; Mr Arthur C. Clarke, science fact and fiction writer, 81; Mrs Myrella Cohen QC, former circuit judge, 71; Professor Bernard Crick, Emeritus Professor of Politics, London University, and biographer, 69; The Hon Peter Dickinson, writer, 71; Miss Jacqueline Duncan, Principal, Inchbald Schools of Design and Fine Arts, 67; Mr Christopher Ellison, actor, 52; Mr Joel Garner, cricketer, 46; Mr Robert Gunn, former chairman of Boots, 73; Miss Heather Hallett QC, Chairman of the Bar Council, 49; Mr Tony Hicks, rock guitarist, 53; Sir Jasper Holloway, former Deputy Governor, Bank of England, 81; Miss Jacqui Lait MP, 51; Miss Stephanie Lawrence, singer, 45; Lord Mottistone, former Lord-Lieutenant and

Governor of the Isle of Wight, 78; Mr Arthur Robinson, President of Trinidad and Tobago, 72; Li-Gea Sir David Scott-Barrett, 76; Mr Rodion Shchedrin, composer, 66; Miss Liv Ullmann, actress, 60; Mr William Whalley, former trade union official, 76; General Sir Roger Wheeler, Chief of the General Staff, 57.

ANNIVERSARIES

Births: Catherine of Aragon, first queen of Henry VIII, 1485; Jane Austen, novelist, 1775; Leopold I, King of the Belgians, 1790; Zoltan Kodaly, composer, 1882; Sir John (Jack) Hobbs, cricketer, 1882; Sir Noel Pierce Coward, playwright, actor and composer, 1889; Dr Margaret Mead, anthropologist, 1901.

Deaths: Pepin II, leader of the Franks, 714; Wilhelm Grimm, philologist and folklorist, 1859; William Terriss (William Charles James Lewis) actor, stabbed by a madman (Richard Archer Prince) on entering the Adelphi Theatre, London 1897; Charles-Camille Saint-

Saens, composer, 1921; Alton Glenn Miller, dance band leader, lost after an air flight 1944; William Somerset Maugham, novelist, 1965.

On this day: Oliver Cromwell became Lord Protector, 1653; the "Boston Tea Party" took place, 1773; Josephine was divorced from Napoleon by Act of the Senate, 1809; the *Charlotte Jane*, first immigrant ship for the Canterbury settlement in New Zealand, arrived at Lyttelton, 1850; the Manchester Ship Canal was completed, 1893; work on constructing the Mersey Tunnel was started, 1925; the first production of the musical *Shogun* took place in London, 1937; the power of the House of Lords to veto legislation was reduced, 1949; synthetic diamonds were first produced by Professor H.T. Hall at the GEC Laboratories in the United States, 1954.

Today is the Feast Day of St Adelaide, St Ado, St Albina, Saints Ananias, Azariah and Mishael (Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego) and St Irenion.

LECTURES

National Gallery: Susan Foster; Neil MacGregor; Christopher Rippelle; "Christmas Round Robin", 1pm.

Victoria and Albert Museum: Sarah Searight, "Merchants and Collectors in the Nehru Gallery (ii)", 2pm. British Museum: Chris Spring, "Artists and Artisans, Perspectives on Tunisian Culture: an introduction", 11.30am. Wallace Collection, London W1: Patricia Falkner, "Dutch Paintings in the Wallace Collection", 1pm. Royal Holloway, London University, Egham, Surrey: Professor Peter Bramley, "The Super-healthy Tomato: fact or fantasy?", 5.30pm. Kuffa Gallery, London W2: Samir Salha, "Arash and Turkish Relations", 7.15pm.

LUNCHEONS

Institute of Physics: Dr Brian Manley, Past President of the Institute of Physics, presided at a luncheon for representatives of the Institute's Corporate

Affiliate companies held yesterday at the Goring Hotel, London SW1. Sir Derek Roberts, Provost of University College London, spoke on "Universities as Businesses".

RECEPTIONS

Airey Neave Trust: Lord Woolf, Master of the Rolls, was guest of honour at a reception held yesterday evening by the Airey Neave Trust at the House of Commons, London SW1, to mark the publication of *Preventing Torture* by Dr Malcolm Evans and Professor Rod Morgan.

DINNERS

Foundation for Science and Technology: Lord Jenkin of Roding, Chairman, Foundation for Science and Technology, was in the chair at a lecture and dinner discussion held yesterday evening at the Royal Society, London SW1. Mr John Hodges, Professor George Fleming and Mr Jon Lane spoke on "Engineering and World Poverty".

CHANGING OF THE GUARD

The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am: 1st Battalion Coldstream Guards mounts the Queen's Guard, at Buckingham Palace, 11.30am, band provided by the Welsh Guards.

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

The Duke of Edinburgh visits Priory Campus, Lundwood, South Yorkshire; visits Rotherham Markets, Rotherham, South Yorkshire, and opens the new roof, visits LuK (UK) Limited,

Waleswood Road, Walesbar, South Yorkshire; and officially opens Sheffield Airport. The Princess Royal, President, the Princess Royal Trust for Carers, visits Pembrokeshire Carers Centre, Haverfordwest, Dyfed, visits the new Carers Centre at Mansel Street, Swansea, West Glamorgan, and

attends a Luncheon at County Hall, Swansea, as President, British Knitting and Clothing Export Council, visits Frank Theak and Roskilly Limited, Cwmbran, Gwent; and, as President, the Missions to Seamen, visits their new building at Alexandra Docks, Newport, Gwent. The Duke of Kent

visits Poole High School, Poole, Dorset, to open the new Performing Arts Centre; visits the Facilities Centre, Day Centre and Social and Education Centre at Stourview Social Services Centre, Sturminster Newton, Dorset; and visits DEF Printing Machines Limited, Weymouth, Dorset.

WORDS

CHRISTOPHER
HAWTRÉE
Nash, n.

over here during the absurd palaver about *News at Ten*. To Canadian ears, however, it most likely has another resonance.

Look up Nash in the Dictionary (as is the current trend, partly an encyclopaedia), and there is the English architect John Nash and the American poet Ogden Nash, but pride of places goes to (Cyril) Knowlton Nash. Who? "From 1978-88 he was chief correspondent and anchor on CBC's 'The National'."

You ask the questions

(Such as: Penelope Leach, if you discovered one of your children smoking dope what would you do?)

Childcare expert Penelope Leach, 61, is the award-winning author of the classic guide to parenting, *Baby and Child*, which has sold over three million copies in 39 languages. Leach studied history at Cambridge and trained as a research psychologist in London. She currently works as an Honorary Senior Research Fellow at London's Royal Free and University College Medical School. She has two grown-up children and lives in north London with her husband.

Where did the Queen go wrong with her children? What advice would you have given her when she sent Charles to Gordonstoun? Anita Hughes, *Horsesham*
It must be difficult to have a close relationship with your child as well as a nation. Don't do it, your Majesty!

Is there anything you regret in the way you brought up your own children? Would you have done anything differently in retrospect? Michelle Eyre, *Milton Keynes*
Like most parents, I regret being as uptight as I was - getting fussed about issues of the day, in hindsight (that useful stuff), I know almost everything comes out in the wash and I'd have saved a lot of energy just having a great time.

Is there too much pressure on women to have children? Angela Summers, *Cheshire*
Any pressure is too much pressure. Biological clocks and putative fathers are bad enough without other people getting in on the act.

My son is four years old and even though I don't want to get pregnant again, I feel he would benefit from a sibling. Should I have another? Melanie King, *Newquay*

I think the only good reason for having a child - first, second or third - is that you (and, preferably, your partner) passionately want not a pregnancy, or a baby, but a child.

Were your children difficult or easy babies? Becky Thomas, *Winchester*
Easy babies - responsive, funny and gorgeous (both); tricky toddlers (especially one); no-problem teenagers (both; sorry but it's true).

If you'd found one of your children smoking cannabis in their bedroom what would you do? Sophie Mitchell, *Turkey*
It would have depended on which child and when. But I would have stressed that it's against the law. I think the law can be a useful support to parents - eg, in trying to persuade

children to go to school, not marry married men three times their age and other horrors that may arise.

Do you feel guilty for putting pressure on mothers to be the "perfect nurturer"? Why can't we just rely on instincts? Chris Allen, *Peterborough*
If a book, mine or anyone else's, makes you feel guilty or inadequate or uncomfortable, for heaven's sake bin it. I don't feel guilty because publishing a book merely makes it available: nobody has to buy it. Newspaper headlines and TV soundbites are far harder to escape.

I resent having to get up each night to breast-feed while my partner sleeps through oblivious. I've started waking him up too while the baby is feeding. Is that justified? Laura James, *Beeston*
Justified by or for whom? If it's what your partnership needs - fine. If it makes you feel better but not him,

you'll have to sort it out between you. But if your baby was in bed with you both, nobody would have to get up.

Can one parent ever be better than two? Gaby Phillips, *Manchester*
Yes. Parenting is a matter of quality, not just quantity. Of course, two good parents are better than one, but if one of the two parents is abusive, violent or coldly critical, the other parent has a far better chance of making a safe, warm, supportive home for the children as a lone parent.

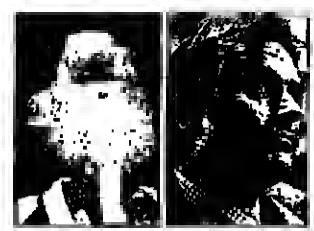
Can children be inherently bad? Gina Mayhew, *Camden, London*
I don't think I believe that anyone can be inherently bad because what is called bad depends so much on culture and circumstances (one nation's or one era's hero is another's mass murderer).

Children who seem "bad" weren't born that way. They're the result of an unfortunate combination of cir-

YOU ASK THE QUESTIONS

NEXT WEEK: FATHER CHRISTMAS, FOLLOWED BY RICHARD DAWKINS, EVOLUTIONARY BIOLOGIST

Send questions for Father Christmas or Richard Dawkins to: You Ask The Questions, Features, *The Independent*, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL (fax 0171-293 2182; e-mail yourquestions@independent.co.uk) by noon on Friday, 18 December



does the best it can by its children; our parents thought it was right to smack us but the last 20 years has taught us to aim for no violence at all in families. Most parents actually don't try to justify smacking. Ask if they smack as part of thoughtful loving discipline and they'll tell you, "I smack when I've lost it."

What attracted you to devoting your career to childcare? Amy Stephen, *St Helens*
I didn't devote my career to childcare. I devoted it to research psychology, specifically child development. The childcare hit came when I added my own children into the mix and discovered the (then) enormous gulf between professionals and parents. I wasn't comfortable straddling that gulf and I've been working since to help close it up.

Do you think one parent should be at home if a child is under three? Emma Doughty, *Blackheath, London*

Babies and very young children need to be cared for within a small magic circle of intimates, people with whom they're on blowing raspberries-against-the-belly terms. It doesn't matter whether that's "at home" or not, or whether it's a parent, another relative or friend.

Is there one piece of legislation that would improve family values? Maxine Heath, *Salford*
The creation of a Minister for Children, with Cabinet-level teeth.

Parenting classes seem very in vogue - do you think they work? Anne Hutton, *Southampton*
That kind of peer group support can be very valuable, and where there are specific problems - like combative toddlers or argumentative teenagers - talking through different ways of coping can help people break out of stale or destructive patterns and find fresh ways forward.

Do you think it's harder to bring up children now than it was 20 years ago? Sara Agnelli, *Hull*

Everyone always thinks the past was better than the present but I'll still answer "probably", because this is a society where being a parent is actually a disadvantage. Even if all the men and women in a firm work the same hours and earn the same money, the parents have to stretch their free time and their money to cover children's needs as well as their own, so at every level of income and accomplishment, parents are busier and poorer than non-parents.

How would you describe a "good" parent? Will Norman, *Hove*
I wouldn't.

Can men and women ever be equal when it comes to who gets left with the baby? Susie Shilling, *Oxfordshire*

Yes. The fact that they mostly aren't in no way suggests they cannot be.

What is your defence for child-centred rearing? Sue Martins, *North Yorkshire*
Why should I have to defend it? I'd like a world where everyone who chooses to have a child is to some extent child-centred (after all, we've all been one).

Why do you find child development so interesting? Christine Wood, *Sussex*
To me it has always seemed fascinating how children turn from blobs of genetic material into chattering, scampering people in two years flat. I still find them fascinating in my own, my grandchildren and other people's.

Shelters from the storm

Sleeping rough is bad enough if you're young. Imagine it at the age of 80. By Darius Sanai

TERRY WANTS to tell his story. He's sitting in a chair in the lounge sipping beer from a cup and looking at me with urgent eyes. Terry once worked for the Ministry of Defence, as a low-ranking civil servant, and lived in Thamesmead, south London, with his wife and two children, playing and touring in a pub rock band in his spare time.

As Terry approached middle age, though, his life began to unravel. First, his wife left him for her boss, leaving him to look after their children. A couple of years later, he gave up his job. "I had to look after the kids, kids are important," he says, waving his finger, taking a sip of Ten-

nants Super. Then the band split up, meaning he lost his main hobby and, given the way he talks about it now, the only other thing that made his life at all fulfilling.

A while later - Terry isn't sure about dates - his house was repossessed. He went straight to a charity shelter and has been homeless since - about 10 years - and will probably remain so until he dies. He never saw Samantha, his daughter, again, though his son James still visits him.

Terry is 58 and sits telling me all this in the clean, warm lounge of the Robertson Street project, a home in south London for the elderly homeless.



The idea of grandparents spending their nights slumped in doorways is horrendous, even in a society where respect for our elders is becoming a concept of the past. Appalling though homelessness is, it is somehow more comforting for our under-used consciences to imagine those sleeping rough as young and fit. Yet every night some 300 grandparents, some in their seventies and eighties, try to sleep on the streets of London.

As well as the daily survival ritual suffered by all their fellow homeless, they have to cope with illness, susceptibility to the cold and all the other problems that age brings and homelessness accentuates.

Robertson Street is run by Bondway, a charity based in London. Although the housing project itself is funded by local authorities and the Government, Bondway relies on charitable donations to fund its daily soup run for the elderly homeless, taking in hundreds of people on the streets of London.



Hungry, homeless and old
The oldest resident is 79: the oldest regular queuing up for the soup run is 82. Several have long forgotten the details of their lives, often sporadically dotted with periods of homelessness. Most of the residents are in their sixties and seventies. Some 200 can sleep in the dormitories of one of Bondway's shelters and 41 are catered for in the clean, modern bedrooms at Robertson Street.

"A lot of the people at Robertson Street are people with alcohol or mental health problems or distinctive personalities who would quite likely end up sleeping on the streets otherwise," says Nick

Dunn, one of the charity's directors. Many have been rejected by council care homes because of their drinking habits. At Robertson Street residents are allowed to drink from cans of the ubiquitous Tennents Super; they wouldn't stay otherwise. Mr Dunn says there are many more on the waiting list.

The dignity afforded to these elderly gentlemen (there are a few women, but most of the old homeless are male) is evident from one look at the airy lounge, where six or seven of them sit all day in armchairs, not saying anything much. "I'm happy here because we're Jimmy's wi me," says John, who is 62, in broadest Glaswegian, pointing at the next chair. Jimmy has slept rough on and off since coming down to London at the end of the Second World War.

These men are the fortunate ones, because every evening they have something to eat and somewhere warm to pass the dying years of their lives. There are hundreds of others who lie, forgotten by their families and friends, the experience of their lives compressed into one quick line ("please help, sir, I fought the Japs in '42"), on the pavements and in the doorways along the route of everybody's commute home.

Bondway Housing Association: 0171-582 1232

THE IRRITATIONS OF MODERN LIFE

21: SURFING ON THE INTERNET BY MAUREEN FREELY

FIRST, THE film version. A handsome astrophysicist is hammering away at his keyboard. He's surfing onto the outer reaches of the web, searching for the secret that will help him prevent nuclear holocaust, and because time is running out, he is gritting his teeth and muttering: "Come on! Come on!" Finally he is one password away from success. Turning to his gorgeous female companion, he says: "Think of something!" and she suggests the villain's mother's maiden name. No go. Then she exclaims: "I know! It's his dog!" Our hero types "Rover" and presto! The world is saved.

The desperate eleventh hour internet search has become a Hollywood staple. To save the world these days you don't need muscles or brains. All you need to know is how to surf. This is not just a film formula. There doesn't seem to be a single person who uses the net who doesn't believe it.



The simplest surfing trip takes hours

"Yahoo!" and "Dogpile". But you know, when I log on, I'm lucky to get past my university home page. Even if I do, the simplest little surfing trip takes me hours. Say I try to order something from the stationery office. I press a key and then I wait 10 minutes while its logo appears. I choose an option, then discover that I've chosen the wrong option, but there is no way out, as all the keys seem to be frozen. Twenty minutes later, I get a flash on the screen informing me that there has been a network error. When I do find the right page and make my order, all I get is some stuff about there being "no configuration". I am invited to download a form but the document that emerges from the printer

is a recipe for "Zippy Banana Pie". Cyberanatics assure me that all my problems will be over once I've offloaded my ancient (ie three-year-old) 386 and equip myself with a "decent" computer. But the fastest machine on the market is not going to solve the problem of access. Sites I've visited so far fall into two categories. Either they are open to everybody because they're run by cranks, or they're worth visiting but impossible to get into unless you pay a subscription. Even then, access depends on you remembering your password and managing to type it correctly without actually being able to see it on the screen. Because a password is not a password unless every other figure is an "a" or a ">" and all the letters are upper case. It's only in the movies that you can save the world by typing "Rover". In the real world, we will one day fall to be brought back from the brink of nuclear disaster because some poor astrophysicist types "???" instead of "??". Or chooses the wrong search engine. Or gets stuck inside Yahoo. Or lost inside a website with logos that take so long to configure that you could walk there faster. If this is surfing, I'd rather take a mud bath.

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980101

Tired of wearing the same outfit to every Christmas party? Call the rent-a-frock brigade. By Tamsin Blanchard



Clockwise from top left: Top, £65, from Steinberg & Tolkien, 193 Kings Road SW3, enquiries 0171-376 3660; Guy Laroche suit, £150, from Steinberg & Tolkien; blue silk dress, £35, gloves, £10, ring, £5, (for three days), to hire at The Contemporary Wardrobe; trouser-suit to hire, £47 for seven days, Stagestruck. Photographer: Tanya Chalkin; stylist: Stephen da Silva; photographer's assistant: Hemanth; make-up: Alex Babsky @ Mandy Coakley using Estee Lauder; hair: Bronwyn Illingworth for Toni & Guy using Tigi; Model: Juliette @ Select. Shot at The Contemporary Wardrobe

Yes, you shall go to the ball

It's party time. Between now and New Year's Eve, the usual dress codes go out of the window. Expect to see oversized Santas, flashing reindeer antlers, and revellers dressed in all sorts of ridiculous outfits wandering drunk and confused, in town, between up and down the country. Party season is fashion's silly season (and you thought every season was silly). There are two options: fancy dresses, as in sexy bits of nothing designed to reveal as much bare flesh as possible; and fancy dress, as in gangsters and molls, vicars and tarts.

At The Contemporary Wardrobe in deepest, darkest Bloomsbury, London, there are doors to every party-gone-wrong. The place itself is something of a find – literally. It is in an old Horse Hospital, hidden away on a narrow street called Colonnade. Ring on the doorbell (best to make an appointment first) and you will be told to come downstairs into the cobbled basement. It's dark, chilly and damp, and you have to be careful you don't slip on the sloping floor that was designed for horses to trot down.

Heather greets you there and, depending on whether you

are looking for a Seventies' outfit (and judging by demand, you probably will be), or a Fifties' ballgown, she will direct you to the right rail. The clothes are filed by date. And there are rails and rails, ranging from the Forties to the present day.

The Contemporary Wardrobe is the collection of costume designer Roger Burton. He has been in the business since the Sixties, and he has collected more clothes than he knows what to do with. He has turned his collection into a library for his own work – mainly supplying costumes for TV commercials – and for anyone else who wants to hire it out. The highlight of the collection is a range of original Westwood/McLaren punk pieces. These T-shirts and bondage wear are probably worth more than the rest of the collection put together. Unfortunately, it is not for hire.

What is for hire is a full-length gold military-style dress with epaulettes and all the trimmings; a pair of Seventies' loon-pants with matching platform boots and Superfly shirt, or a pair of furry moon boots. There are clothes for men and women, but he prepared to spend some time rummaging to find the outfit you've always fantasised about wearing.

Like The Contemporary Wardrobe, Angels & Bermans is a collection of clothes and costumes primarily designed to be hired out to the wardrobe departments of film and theatre companies. "We are absolutely inundated at the moment," said their spokesperson. "Seventies' outfits are always very popular. There are lots of James Bond parties at the moment, too."

Angels & Bermans is the obvious choice for society party-goers in need of a little fancy dress. There are four floors of stuff, ranging from the Romans and Greeks (people actually hire costumes for toga parties, rather than simply wrapping themselves in an old sheet) to Star Trek and Alien. Dangerous Liaisons and 18th century costumes are in great demand right now, too. Costume hire costs from £60 + VAT for a week. Over in London's Spitalfields, Stagestruck Costume Company is doing a roaring trade. The phones don't stop ringing with requests to hire pieces, ranging from theatrical to vintage. There are also contemporary evening clothes, and a selection of masks, capes and other accessories to buy.

Cyril Ives and his partner set up the business two years ago,

aiming particularly at the party market. "We put together a whole look. The hire fee includes everything – accessories, jewellery and false eyelashes, if necessary."

Stagestruck is getting a lot of work from people in the City, where theme parties are *de rigueur*. And top of the list? Seventies' nights, of course, closely followed by Grease, James Bond, Cowboys & Indians and Titanic. Already they are sourcing party wear for the Millennium: "We have created a lot of androgynous and futuristic costumes, and there's a lot of nostalgia for historical costumes."

Of course, costume hire is only worth it if the costume is a one-off or, if, like those at Stagestruck, it includes the right accessories. Anyone with a little imagination can make their own. Or if it's a vintage dress you're after, huy rather than hire – you never know when it might prove useful or, more likely, back in fashion.

Angels & Bermans, 119 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2; Monday, Tuesday, Friday, 10-6; Wednesday and Thursday 12-8; enquiries 0171-536 5678. Arrive at least one hour before closing to allow time for fittings



Gold full-length dress with gold military epaulettes, and gold shoes, all to hire from The Contemporary Wardrobe Collection, The Horse Hospital, Colonnade, Bloomsbury London WC1, enquiries 0171-713 7370; prices range from £25 for individual items to £55 for full outfits, with accessories, for three days hire; black skirt with multi-coloured pleat, £47 to hire for seven days, from Stagestruck Costume Company, 41 Brushfield Street, Spitalfields, London E1; opening times Monday to Friday 10-7; Saturday and Sunday 11-4; enquiries 0171-375 1580

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Mmm, smells like Christmas

If alcohol doesn't get you in the mood, try perfume. By Belinda Morris

DOES IT feel as though it's going to be one of those Christmases? You know, the usual thing – frantic, fraught and frazzled with plenty of frayed tempers and tense shoulder muscles? Wouldn't it be great if you could invoke a little harmony, jiggery-pokery, sometime around now (just to give it time to work) and know that by the big day, all around you will have miraculously become serene and harmonious?

Yes, OK, you can do this with drugs and alcohol, but their powers are limited, temporary and not without a certain risky unpredictability. What you really need is a magic potion. Something seemingly innocent, not too dramatic, but with the capability of rendering the cantankerous contented, perhaps. And if it could also double as a Christmas present for the person who thinks they have everything, so much the better.

What we probably don't need is another new perfume, but Life is a little different. It's a collection of six individual fragrances, launched simultaneously (without fanfare) and aimed at anyone who prefers not to run with the pack. With



names such as "entice", "entrance", "enhance", "enact", "engage" and "enchanted", they'll appeal to those who like to put a spiritual spin on scent, as a sort of safe mood-altering substance.

Fashionably minimal and uniform in design, Life is the result of a rather exotic three-way collaboration. Lev Glazman left his native Russia in the Seventies and, with his partner Alina Roytberg, established the US-based natural body-care line, Fresh (Browns and Liberty being among the UK stockists of their beautifully packaged scents). Lev's passion for scent is shared by the

third member of the team: a British perfumer, Lyn Harris.

"I read about her company, Mio, in *Arena*, and knew that I had to meet her," Lev explains. "It seemed very ahead of her time, with an elegant approach that looked beautiful. We did meet. We obviously had a similar vision and I knew that we could create great energy and dynamics together." For six years, Lev and Alina had been nurturing the idea of a special, niche fragrance for Fresh and now, with a Paris and Grasse-trained perfumer on board, reality was a little nearer.

"My brief," says Lyn, "was to create a mood range of fragrances that would not only make you smell nice, but feel good too. They had to be breezy rather than in-your-face powerful and competing. I wanted them to include a lot of natural ingredients, particularly food ones like basil, bergamot and mint, which work well with the body, infiltrating it rather than sitting on top of it."

But why six? "We want to give customers the freedom of choice, not dictate one smell to them. You can go to your bathroom and think: 'What do I

want to wear today? What mood am I in?'" says Lev, who admits that his life is practically ruled by fragrance. "They can change a mood – a fragrance can affect wellbeing. It's almost protective, like surrounding yourself with an aura."

A nice thought, if a tad fanciful – and it isn't actually guaranteed to protect you against seasonal gremlins. However, you could give it a go, because out of six, there ought to be at least one that, as Lev promises, "if you completely give in to it, will come at you". He advises trying them all on blotters first, then spraying a maximum of three on the body – without rubbing them in.

There are two that Lev recommends for winter: "bold and organic" engage, with tangerine and orange top notes blended with spicy basil on a rich base of vetiver and amber; and entice, which he describes as "moody and desirable" with fruit and citrus notes boosted by tuberose, orange flower, jonquil, vanilla and woods.

Life, £43-£46, only from Liberty, Regent St, London W1. Mail order: 0171-734 1234

It's a simple case of lost principals

Contrary to popular belief (and management spin), it's not just the Royal Opera that's in trouble. Its sister company the Royal Ballet is too. John Percival and Nadine Meisner weigh up its chances of survival

At Gerald Kaufman's parliamentary investigation last year into the situation at the Royal Opera House, Vivien Duffield, the theatre's deputy chairman, leaned into the microphone and stated that artistic levels were "higher than they have ever been before". She must have a short memory.

The official line is also that the Royal Ballet meets the highest international standards. This runs counter to our experience, namely that the best companies abroad offer more excitement and skill. Besides, companies with the highest international standards are not usually so careless as to lose one leading man, followed by five others in the space of a few weeks. It suggests a malaise within the Royal Ballet, and the departures are a symptom of this.

Perhaps he is too upset, perhaps he doesn't want to be confrontational, but the company's director, Anthony Dowell, won't talk to us. Usually he is understanding when dancers leave for a career change. But this exodus was just too much: first the Japanese dancer, Tetsuya Kumakawa, then the others, who on 20 November handed Dowell their resignations shortly before curtain up in Belfast. The "Famous Five" (Stuart Cassidy, Michael Nunn, William Trevitt, Gary Avis, Matthew Dibble) were not exactly famous before their carefully orchestrated announcement that they and Kumakawa were forming a large British-based company, with orchestra, a female corps of 24, and generous financial backers.

Twenty years ago, Dowell, a far more famous dancer, took indefinite leave to join American Ballet Theatre. "When you get to a certain point," he had explained, "unless you have new ballets all the time to keep you stimulated, it's very hard." How were the Royal Ballet to replace him? "Things go on," he said. "They are not going to stop without me."

However, today's story is not about one individual leaving for new challenges with an established company. Reasonably contented dancers do not collectively jump ship for what is, after all, an uncertain venture, even if they have been promised



Top right, the exodus leader, Tetsuya Kumakawa; above, Royal Ballet director Anthony Dowell, in the company's production of *The Sleeping Beauty*

lavish salaries. "It says a lot about where the company is at the moment, that they are prepared to make that break," says Bruce Sansom, one of the only two leading men (with Jonathan Cope) remaining from last year. "The company is not as creative a force as when I first joined 15 years ago. They have not been creatively pushed in the way I imagine they would have liked."

How will the Royal Ballet fill the present gap, given that the available

talent is nowhere as strong as in Dowell's performing days? Moreover, as Sansom points out, the Royal Ballet's apostolic succession, that link through generations which has contributed to its style, has now been broken. "When I started," says Sansom, "I learnt from the company's principals. You either accepted what they did or you didn't, but it became part of your memory bank." The company's young men will instead have to look to outsiders.

although the Russian star Irek Mukhamedov has been relegated to guest status and, inexplicably, the gifted new Cuban recruit, Carlos Acosta, has few roles so far.

Things, though, might have been even worse. During recent pay negotiations, at least 20 dancers thought of quitting. The new ROH chairman, Colin Southgate, and his Board, as part of a funding deal with the Culture Secretary, Chris Smith, tried to impose savage new terms of 36 weeks annual employment, with longer hours and little or no overtime.

This actually widened the gap between the dancers and the rest of the ROH employees, and they would also be worse off than their opposite numbers in Birmingham Royal Ballet and English National Ballet.

The Governors of the Royal Ballet, an independent board established by the company's Royal Charter to safeguard its interests, saw the danger of dancers haemorrhaging away. They pressed hard to preserve full-year contracts. Aware that some dancers were so upset they wanted the company to break away from Covent Garden, their chairman, Lord Sainsbury of Preston Candover, commissioned a feasibility report into this last-resort measure. Fortunately, the Governors managed to convince the Opera House Board (described by one insider as staggeringly ignorant about ballet) to let go of their business ethics, and accept that what might, on paper, make good commercial sense, bore no relation to how a ballet company must operate. So now the dancers have a good settlement, with concessions which will facilitate more broadcasts - ITV companies are willing to take this up.

But that is only a first step in a recovery plan that needs to overhaul radically the artistic direction, managerial structures, and whole ethos of the ROH. Enter Michael Kaiser, the new executive director, who started

last month. Much hope is invested in his ability to cure financially sick arts companies - most recently, American Ballet Theatre. He also has the rare distinction of being genuinely enthusiastic about ballet, as well as opera.

The dancers apparently believe he will take their interests to heart. His chief aim is "a return to putting the artist first" and he looks forward to "a much more aggressively creative period in a supportive environment" - which would be a welcome change from the ballet's boringly cautious programmes over recent years. He believes a bold repertoire can be made viable by stirring up public excitement. He also has ideas for dropping ticket prices on certain nights, and for free performances in the ROH's new studio theatre. But even this shining white knight rides in with one disadvantage - namely that all his experience has been in the United States, where tax laws favour donors, and sponsors are more numerous.

Another big question is whether Dowell, as artistic director, and Anthony Russell-Roberts, as administrator, can help give the ballet fresh life. For years, they have presided over its decline, sanctioning fewer performances, and a

repertory focused on over-exposed pot-boilers to pull in the crowds. Dowell is a shy, insular figure, when the Royal Ballet needs an inspirational and publicity-conscious leader. Russell-Roberts now talks of a broader range of new and existing works. Mark Baldwin and Michael Corder are creating pieces for the next months; Christopher Bruce and Siobhan Davies have also been approached. The improved stage facilities of the new theatre will allow more programmes and premieres annually, although for financial reasons, full year-round performances are not expected until the 2001-2 season.

Another benefit will be the Studio Theatre with about 400 seats, where young choreographers will be tried out, without much expenditure on designs. Crucial will be reform at the Royal Ballet School, traditionally the source of new recruits. If standards have slipped, part of the blame lies at the roots. It is significant that David Bintley at Birmingham Royal

Ballet now recruits most dancers from outside.

A question mark remains with the ROH Board's decision to create a new post of overall artistic director. If the chosen candidate is an opera person, Kaiser will need to redouble his efforts for the ballet, which has long been treated as the family's tiresome junior member. It also remains to be seen how much power either Kaiser or the new artistic director will have, with a chairman who has shown a very hands-on attitude and a deputy chairman (Vivien Duffield), with the view that important donors as herself should be entitled to representation on the board "as a quid pro quo".

Is the Royal Opera House to be the haub of the ultra-rich who can buy into its control, or a genuinely public property with an adequate subsidy? We have seen too much harm done by boards of amateurs operating in their spare time, meddling with the work of professionals who are paid to be accountable, focused and knowledgeable. Until the Government sorts this out, the fundamental flaws will remain. We risk losing the opportunity to put the Royal Ballet on the path towards regaining its glorious standards.

He's meaty, beaty, big and bouncy

JAZZ

CHRISTIAN MCBRIDE
JAZZ CAFE
LONDON

ONE OF the complaints about contemporary jazz is that it has no stars to attract an audience. Christian McBride, who is certainly larger than life, is doing his best. He loves the showmanship of the job. Like his Verve label-mate, Roy Hargrove, he thrives in front of an audience. For someone like Hargrove, a mercurial little fellow who plays trumpet, it's easy to grandstand. But McBride has, for the most part, to stand with an upright bass, besides encouraging his small, disciplined group of post-boppers into their best form.

Since he is as young as he is (he won't turn 30 until the next century - even though he seems like a veteran of the scene already) jazz has had to take its place with other kinds of black music in his affections. His admiration for James Brown is unstinting and constant. Yet his great gift is for fashioning the kind of steady, supple jazz time which seems effortless. It is actually one of the trickiest elements in playing, and because he does it so well, McBride is always in demand by other leaders.

The Jazz Café was lucky; then, to catch his band and find them in prime fettle. His most recent record, *A Family Affair*, is often one of those mish-mashes which major labels try to get out of players who have a broad range of sympathies, but here the music had seriousness and vitality in a near-perfect balance. "A Family Affair" itself, the old Sly Stone tune, became a serenely swinging essay on hard-bop blues.



Christian McBride: steady and supple David Sinclair

Tim Warfield is a tenor saxophonist of unhurried, steadfast demeanour. He's rather like the old-time Chicago soul tenormen, and his tone is as broad as a church door. Rodney Green, at 19 another in the seemingly inexhaustible line of brilliant young jazz drummers, fired off dazzling rhythmic licks while breaking no little sweat that he felt no need to remove his jacket. Pianist Sheldrick Mitchell completes a formidable group. His solos are compendiums of McCoy Tyner's favourite phrases, but his comping behind the other

players showed unexpected delicacy and wit.

If McBride's records are something of a truce between styles, his live playing is a celebration. Soul and jazz are rarely combined as well as this, and his playing mirrors the band: virtuosic, massive, intense. He has spoken of making a straight R&B record, but that would be a distraction and a pity. Jazz needs him.

RICHARD COOK

A version of this review appeared in later editions of yesterday's paper

The power in Russia's heart

STRAVINSKY ONCE described Rimsky-Korsakov as "like an adopted parent... sympathetic... generous, and unkind only to admirers of Tchaikovsky".

Never knowingly unstinting in his praise, Stravinsky then added: "Obviously there was nothing profound, either in Rimsky's nature, or in his music." Perhaps, with Christmas approaching and London concert life given over to "nothing profound", that makes Rimsky's music the perfect choice for the London Philharmonic Orchestra's brief festival.

A feast of Rimsky-Korsakov alone might be a little rich, even for this time of year, and Sunday's concert, conducted by Alexander Lazarev, offered Rimsky's opera *Kashchey the Immortal* alongside Glazunov's *Symphony No. 1*, a piece that shows just how

Prelude to the Memory of Rimsky-Korsakov, and Stravinsky's 1911 *Firebird* suite.

No doubt Stravinsky would feel thoroughly grumpy about having his first great masterpiece served as a kind of *bonne bouche* for *Kashchey* ("The librettos of his operas... are, on the whole, embarrassingly bad"), but the juxtaposition was telling, and not only because of shared narrative characteristics. The *Firebird* can seem an unfocused piece, but Lazarev and his players found a proper theatricality; the brass a little raw, as it should be, the strings menacing in their low thrum. Lazarev, prancing like a giant firebird himself, went wholeheartedly for the big gestures, making the "Infernal Dance" a terrifying climax to a piece that shows just how

CLASSICAL

LPO RIMSKY-KORSAKOV
FESTIVAL
ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL
LONDON

much Stravinsky learnt from lessons with Rimsky.

Nothing in *Kashchey* had quite the same impact. Rimsky described his one-act opera as an "autumn fairy-tale", and as in all good fairy-tales, surface good cheer is always mitigated by an underlying melancholy. Yet with its magic potions, flying Storm Knights and a daughter who becomes a weeping willow, it needs more forthright presentation than this rather stiff concert performance. Lazarev had a cast of regulars from the Kirov and the Bolshoi, and it was bracing to

hear Russian sung by Russians, but only the rumbling bass of Vladimir Matorin's Storm Knight felt like a figure from the opera house, although Marina Shaguch sang well; this was no conventional fairy-tale maiden, but a weeping princess singing a sweetly lethal lullaby.

The previous Thursday, Mark Elder's rather congested programme put Rimsky in the company of Glinka, Musorgsky and Stravinsky again. Unlike Lazarev, Elder is at home with sweeping grandiloquence, and has the commitment to convince us that there's more to Rimsky than glittery orchestration. It would have been good to get more of *May Night* than the Act One excerpts he offered, but in Marianna Tarasova, Vsevolod Grivnov and Paata Burchuladze, Elder had three personalities to match his own. Tarasova was particularly impressive, not a barnstorming mezzo, but warmly musical and matched to Grivnov's Italianate tenor. And if Burchuladze is not quite so weighty a bass as he once was, still there's plenty of sulphur in the voice.

Rimsky's operas may have been comforting stories. Tarasova told itself when times were hard, but these performances proved that they had a still potent brilliance that sparkles as brightly as any Christmas bauble.

NICK KIMBERLEY

The London Philharmonic plays Rimsky-Korsakov, *Sibelius* and Brahms, 7.30pm, Thursday 17 December, Royal Festival Hall (0171 960 4242)

Homage to the master of birdsong

OLIVIER MESSIAEN would have been 90 last Thursday. With the BBCSO devoting an entire weekend in January to featuring Messiaen's music, the Birmingham wing of the BBC made their contribution last week through a series of broadcasting concerts, aiming to explore the context of Messiaen's music within the present century.

Messiaen was certainly not averse to thinking in terms of broad structure and lengthy timescales, so he would not have been daunted by the prospect of three concerts on Thursday evening, supplemented by a further lengthy concert the following night. For those unfamiliar with Messiaen's music, the relevance of most of the works in Peter Donohoe's enjoyable opening piano recital would only have become fully ap-

parent during the Friday concert. Takemitsu's sublime *Rain Tree Sketch II*, and Tristan Murail's charming tribute, *Cloches d'adieu et un sourire*, found their most profound resonances during Rosemary Hardy's beguiling account of their teacher's early song cycle, *Chants de terre et de ciel*, and the exhilarating performance of the wartime *Visions de l'Amen* by pianists Peter Hill and Benjamin Frith.

The two Messiaen pieces in Donohoe's recital, *Nouvelles rythmiques* and *Contépointe*, date from a brief period of radical experimentation (1949-51), to which only the brief *Piano piece no 3* by Stockhausen suggested a kinship.

It took a pleasant stroll from the Adrian Boult Hall, through Birmingham's increasingly impressive and expanding cultural quarter, to get

CLASSICAL

OLIVIER MESSIAEN
BIRTHDAY CONCERT
BBCSO CENTRE
BIRMINGHAM

to the evening's main event, a three-part concert given by Birmingham Contemporary Music Group under George Benjamin, at their very smart, new, multi-functional base - the CBSO Centre.

Messiaen's importance as a pedagogue was firmly underlined through works by prominent students, linked only by their diversity. The hardest edge came from Xenakis's raw, yet curiously jaunty, *Jalons*, while *Memoriales* radiated a warm haze, with the BCMG capturing the subtle lights and shades of Boulez's dappled light piece.

In his own hands, Ben-

jamin's *At First Light* was at one moment calmly lambent, and the next, gloriously refulgent. The wry melancholy of *Light Blue*, *Almost White*, by Detlev Müller-Siemens, unfortunately suffered from preceding the exquisitely refined, beautiful lyricism of Alexander Goehr's *...kein Gedanke, nur ruhiger Schlaf*.

Nevertheless, two Messiaen works rightly stole the show, thanks in part to the extraordinary pianism of Pierre-Laurent Aimard. His account of *La rousserolle effarvatte* had its idiosyncrasies, but, as in the fearsome cadenza in *Oiseaux exotiques*, he was living the music, becoming in turn each one of the numerous species of birds.

As well as being an avid ornithologist, Messiaen was a profoundly religious composer. Stating the obvious, of

course, but this aspect of his art was not broached until, quite literally, the 11th hour. Following a 20-minute trudge, during which the eyes were numbed by the sight of tarmac and the glare of car headlights, the hitherto absence of references to Catholicism was underlined in gilt upon entering the opulence of Birmingham Oratory, with the pungent red, blue, green and gold colours of its mosaics.

The late hour actually added to the atmosphere of Gillian Weir's recital and if the Nicholson organ struggled with some of the quieter dynamics, and *Joie et clarté des Corps Glorieux* took on the character of a stylophone in need of Valium, it had sufficient power to deliver the awe-inspiring conclusion of *Dieu parmi nous*.

CHRISTOPHER DINGLE



George Bernard Shaw, Alan Bennett and Kenneth Tynan: the reviewers' prime duty is to keep the level of debate surrounding a play or production as high as possible and its manner entertaining

Postcards from the proscenium

A bad film review means bad box office, but the movie itself remains unaffected. By contrast, a theatre review can change a production. In the fourth part of our week-long series on criticism, we examine the role of the theatre critic. By Paul Taylor

Whenever I ponder the subject of theatre criticism in newspapers, I'm reminded of a Victoria Wood sketch in which Patricia Routledge is heard to declare: "I don't believe in speaking ill of anyone. If I've something nasty to say, I pop it on a postcard."

At its considerable worst, that is all that newspaper reviewing is: popping it on a postcard – the only difference being that the postcard is sent to thousands of homes and has a fairly classy address at the top. As critics are, after all, powerful only by virtue of their temporary position. So a good rule when you are writing a review is to imagine it anonymously scrawled in biro on a crumpled scrap of paper picked up from the pavement the next day by a member of the public. Would it still arrest that person with its cogency of argument, vividness of evocation, and lightly worn authority? Or would it be held at arms' length and hastily dropped in a bin?

Theatre reviewing has certain distinctive features that can make it an even trickier and more treacherous business than criticism of the visu-

al arts, cinema and TV. Unlike a painting or a movie, a theatrical production vanishes – the evanescence of the experience beautifully evoked by Ben Jonson who wrote, of one of his masques: "The envy was that it lasted not still, or now it is past, cannot by imagination, much less description, be recovered to a part of that spirit it had in the gliding by."

By struggling to preserve and analyse the spirit which a production had in the gliding by, theatre criticism attempts to prove that Jonson was being unduly defeatist here.

Of course, any critic who got swollen-headed and made a show of writing for posterity would be behaving not only immodestly but counter-productively. Theatre is inherently a social activity: an energy between actors and audience in a particular space at a particular moment – an image of society facing itself. So the best way a critic can serve posterity is by fulfilling his first duty: to communicate to those of his contemporaries who weren't there what the occasion felt like and what thoughts it provoked.

The advent of video recordings of productions has not destroyed, nor will it, this historical function of the theatre critic. It's not just that – as

anyone who has heard a gramophone record of Gielgud's Richard II or the preserved squeaking of Ellen Terry will attest – theatrical fashions date alarmingly quickly and need contextualising. It's that, as evidence, this mechanically reproduced stuff is on the level of old home movie footage of a party nobody living was invited to.

Another distinctive feature of theatre is that a production is a work-in-progress (or regress) for the whole of its life and therefore especially exposed to the interventions of critics. An art or film reviewer may pan a piece of work but, in so doing, they don't risk changing its nature. By contrast, try going to a performance of a stage comedy on the night after bad reviews have appeared. The event is unattractively skewed as the cast battle to win over an audience prejudiced from the outset. This process can, of course, equally be constructive. Take the case of the much rewritten musical *Martin Guerre*, now in its third incarnation at the West Yorkshire Playhouse, and all the better for having taken on board the criticisms made of its two West End versions.

Theatre is also a peculiarly embattled medium, constantly having



THE CRITICAL CONDITION

its obituary notice trotted out by fashionable types whose minds are serenely unbiased by any recent research. There is, therefore, the charge that critics are too complicit with the theatrical establishment, overrating things on principle and providing managements with screaming superlatives in order to raise their own diminished profile and to ensure that their particular trade survives (there's a fair bit of this).

Conversely, there's the charge that we are all too professionally jaded to rise to the occasion. It's a no-win scenario, amusingly illustrated by a passage in Alan Bennett's *Diaries*. Noting that Steven Berkoff

had described critics as "worn-out old tarts", Bennett rejoins: "If only they were, the theatre would be in a better state. In fact, critics are more like dizzy girls, out for the evening, just longing to be fucked and happy to be taken in by any plausible rogue who will flatter their silly heads while knowing roughly the whereabouts of their private parts."

Peter Brook in *The Empty Space* made a similar point more soberly when he wrote that: "A critic is always serving the theatre when he is hounding out incompetents. If he spends most of his time grumbling, he is almost always right." Not that he should be bellyaching into a void. His complaints should be set against "an image of how theatre should be in his community". It's no accident that Shaw and Tynan, the greatest theatre critics in England this century, both began writing in periods when hidebound theatrical institutions cried out for the devastating wit of the constructive iconoclast.

In his fine book on theatre criticism, Irving Wardle quotes a lovely phrase from Charles Marowitz: "The quality of immaturity: the tacit assumption that behind the inadequate, the extraordinary is raging to get out," which Marowitz sees as the

mark of great reviewing. Not what is, but what could be. In an ideal world, critics would, I suppose, be so eloquent about these sensed possibilities, that the playwrights would be inspired to transform them into living realities.

Meanwhile, in the actual world, reviewing space gets tighter: there's a phillistine blurring of criticism and news reporting; and even some supposedly civilised papers now put a coded-for-the-consumer range of stars over a review – a practice seemingly designed to free people from the dreadful burden of actually having to peruse it. But it is not serving the reader to allow theatre criticism to dwindle into mere thumbs-up, thumbs-down tipstering, important though that role is. The reviewers' prime duty is to keep the level of debate surrounding a play or production as high as possible and its manner entertaining. Bad critics try to second-guess the taste of their audience and cravenly pander to it. I know of one broadsheet paper that would not let its reviewer cover productions at the Gate Theatre at a time when that fringe venue was winning every award in sight. Why? "Because our readers don't go the Gate." By that

logic, of course, they never will.

A critic needs to break through such circularity of thinking. As James Fenton once put it: "This is the spirit of critical limidity: I can't stand this new piece, but, oh dear, Johnny Public is going to love it, so I'd better watch my words." Above all, you have to guard against both personal and cliquish complacency. Every theatre reviewer should have pinned over his or her desk the following remarks by Harold Pinter: "There is a definite and amusing resistance on the part of the London critics to a writer doing anything at all different... The critics don't like play 'C', but... when play 'D' comes along, they point immediately to the virtues that play 'C' possessed and regard play 'D' as the deviation."

As the past year has demonstrated, fixed ideas about what constitutes drama would bar you from imaginative entry into a lot of new works. An open mind is not the same as an empty one. It's as well to take care, for when the waters of theatrical creativity have gurgled down the plughole of oblivion, the critic's words are the grimy tidemark left round the edges of the bath. Better make sure it's not too unprepossessing a sight.

ON THE FRINGE

THE DEMON HEADMASTER PLEASANCE, LONDON ■ ID YOUNG VIC STUDIO, LONDON

IT DOESN'T take much in the way of brains to work out what *The Demon Headmaster* is about. We all know the type: the beak hell-bent on world domination, able to hypnotise his or her pupils in order to get results. It's hardly surprising that the drama series, based on the book by Gillian Cross, has become one of Children's BBC's biggest success stories.

At the Pleasance, the idea of creating a spin-off musical must have sounded as exciting as the drone of an overhead aircraft to an island castaway. But unpleasant things happen if you don't get to grips with the basics. The problem with *The Demon Headmaster*, the musical, is that there isn't a single song that justifies its existence – incredibly, there isn't even a solo for the neo-Dickensian Head (the suitably stern-looking former teacher, Roger Parrott). Matthew White's production boasts keen central performances, a nice cardboard cut-out set and some droll moments but the show is mind-numbing. Eric Angus and Cathy Shostak contribute unspectacular rock backdrops for Iain Halstead and Paul James's would-be anthems



"The Demon Headmaster" at the Pleasance

which chase after catchiness with all the wasted enthusiasm of a dog that thinks it's been thrown a stick.

At best, songs like "The Worst Class in the World" ("We're the last resort and we can't be taught") convey the scruffy rebelliousness that unites the five members of SPLAT ("the Society for the Protection of our Lives Against Them"), while padding out the gang's creaking plots to stop the HM and his brainwashed minions. But in the main, the lame lyrics insult the young audience's intelligence.

These adolescent heroes, outcast from their peer-group, aren't know-alls, but that doesn't mean they're stupid.

Id, a new project by the learning disabled theatre company, Strathcona at the Young Vic Studio, is concerned with drawing a similar distinction, though the emphasis is as much on appearance as on IQ. The piece explores the thoughtless marginalisation of those with learning difficulties. If the intent sounds worthy, the directors – Ann Cleary and Ian McCurrach – go out of their way

to defeat expectation. The action is principally set in a Victorian "human zoo", organ music piping away in the background, the ringmaster, Frankie Roquespeare (Spencer Abadio), urges us to admire his "fabulous freaks of nature" as they perform magic tricks. The story charts the lives of one of the six "uglies", Malady the Mongolboy (Pius Hickey), and his twin brother, the handsome Beau (Sheldon Antoine), from separation to reunion.

I found it an uncomfortable but compelling two hours. The scenario is tilted sufficiently to the past for it to be a moving tribute to those for whom this kind of exploitation was often the only rescue from the workhouse. At the same time, for the non-disabled, a sense of shame is never far away, although the light-hearted script sweetens the guilt-trip. PC theatre fit for a post-PC age. Now there's an oddity.

DOMINIC CAVENTISH

The Demon Headmaster, Pleasance, London, N7 (0171-609 1800) until 9 January. 'Id', Young Vic, London, SE1 (0171-328 6363) until 23 December

Turkish delight for Christmas night

REVIEW

THE CINDER GIRL/
THE NIGHT BEFORE
CHRISTMAS
ON TOUR

THE ART of acting meets its greatest challenge when confronted by an audience of children. It has to be a special deal. The show has to be constructed with children in mind, and performed with solemn intent. It was reported that an invited audience of Plymouth children ran amok recently when the RSC thought they might be captured by the villainy and heroics of *The Merchant of Venice*.

Fortunately, children's theatre has its own practitioners. Bill Buffery's Orchard Theatre production of *The Cinder Girl* enraptured an audience of Somerset schoolchildren at the Brewhouse in Taunton for two hours. Not a rustle, no shouting, no scrambling on the floor after a lost tooth, just appreciative giggles, and sighs of contentment. Buffery writes, directs and acts, and knows how to connect.

The Cinder Girl, set in Arabian Nights country (well, Istanbul), is dazzling to watch. It has a talking (and flying) camel, a recipe for making Turkish Delight, and a princess who talks utter nonsense and makes it sound reasonable.

This is all done with mime and

imagination, and a touch of Goonish humour. It is clear that mimed slapstick is just as effective as splatting everyone with shaving foam. Children will accept that flour and eggs and jelly is being applied in mime, as effectively as in reality. Transformations can be accepted before your very eyes, without blackouts, drum rolls, flash tape and smoke. If the children are captured by the story, they use their compensating imagination.

Like all Buffery's productions, *The Cinder Girl* is presented on the level. No kidding, this is real. The children, it seemed, appreciated the absence of patronage. The show proceeds smoothly with bags of charm and simple theatrical effects. An undoubted triumph for Rachel Thorne's po-faced lead, Gill Nathanson, Buffery, Justin McCarron, and Melanie Baxter-Jones,

who, working as a team, weave a spell of pure wonder.

Theatre Alibi are another group with expertise in the same field. In the adult theatre world they produce original and devised performances, a technique that works well for children. *The Night Before Christmas* is three stories (by Dan Jamieson), performed by Emma Rice and Henry Hawkes, and directed by Nikki Sved, which filled Dartington's Barn Theatre.

The performers use an informal approach, establishing a rapport before the show starts, and the stories themselves feature beguiling puppets, which are just lifted around, without any attempt to imitate real life, back-screen projection, and original instruments made by Dave Sawyer (hand chimes, and a zither like an autoharp), plus thrilling wordless singing.

ALLEN SADDLER

The Cinder Girl and *The Night Before Christmas* are touring the West Country before Christmas. For details: Orchard 01271-371475, Alibi 01392-217315

Gifts for Gordon Gekkos

There are plenty of get-rich-quick guides for your fiscally-minded friends. By Iain Morse



Wall Street's masters of the universe didn't get where they are without reading all the latest financial planning books

STUCK FOR last-minute Christmas presents for someone who doesn't deserve anything more exciting? A good basic introduction to some aspect of financial planning could be the answer. By happy coincidence there is no shortage of writers willing to offer sure-fire, cast-iron, get-rich-quick guides to investment.

But take care when you decide just which title your friends or relatives should receive. For instance, if you are hoping to inherit from a rich maiden aunt, giving her a guide to emerging markets or hedge funds could turn out to be a very expensive error.

Tony Grainger's *How to Finance Your Retirement* (£7.99, Century Business Books), is a workaday introduction to the whole subject of retirement planning. Its main focus is on pension provision, but this is integrated with chapters on lump-sum investment and long-term care. It's an entry-level guide.

The *Pocket Pensioners Guide*, by Robin Ellison, (£14.99, Prentice Hall Europe) is an excellent handbook for

anyone in work who is seeking both to plan and to maximise their pension provision. Covering the state pension system, it then looks at further provision both for the employed and self-employed.

Valuable sections are included on personal pension mis-selling and how you can seek compensation for it, tracking down "frozen" entitlement in schemes offered by previous employers, and current legislation on pensions and divorce. Strongly recommended.

These days, anyone investing in shares has to decide whether to buy them direct, or through collective investments like unit and investment trusts. Most of us take the latter course. Joanna Slaughter's *Guide to Investment Trusts & Unit Trusts* (£15.99, FT Pitman) is an even-handed introduction to the strengths and weaknesses of each type of investment, winning an award in its category for plain English and the way it explains an inherently complex subject matter.

However, tracker funds do not appear in the index, while PEFs get only a single chapter. Elsewhere, Ms

Slaughter gives a concise explanation of how to choose and manage an investment portfolio, including the effects both of income and capital gains tax. A good value middle-level guide.

For a summary of the analytic techniques used in investment decisions, Caroline Sefton's *A-Z of Investment* (£16.99, FT Pitman) offers a jargon-free introduction to complex subject matter. For instance, you may never buy share options using a "straddling and strangling technique", but at least if a stranger sits next to you on a park bench and talks about it, mutual misunderstanding can be avoided. This book also contains a valuable - if brief - section on investment software, including names and addresses of firms' marketing programmes for use at home which have won the approval of the *Investors' Chronicle*.

If you decide to invest directly in shares, it might pay to read Roy Warren's *How to Understand and Use Company Accounts* (£12.99, Century Business Books). This gives a concise explanation of con-

cepts like "return on equity", company gearing and interest cover.

Understanding company accounts is also a useful preliminary to reading Jim Slater's *Zulu Principle* (£12.99, Orion Business Books). "Lucky" Jim, one-time *bête noire* of *Private Eye*'s City Slickers column, made a pile of money. But if you expect his "10-step guide to wealth creation" to give away secrets, you will be disappointed. In fact, Jim's formula for stock market success looks pretty much like everyone else's: buy undervalued shares and wait for them to go up in value, making sure you sell before the market peaks.

Richard Koch's *Selecting Shares that Perform* (£20.99, Pitman) includes the unique "1-2-3 test", designed by that "great American sage of human behaviour", Hal Leavitt. Completing the test will tell which investments you should buy. It starts by asking whether you believe in God, before wanting to know: "Which of the next three characters are you most like or least unlike: (a) Hitler (b) the Daleks, or (c) Attila the Hun?"

Why leave out Saddam Hussein? Best not to expect too much from this one.

Colin Chapman's *How the Stock Markets Work*, (£10, Century), is more a narrative than analytic introduction to global share trading price setting, aimed at middle-brow readers. It could be read with Charles Vincent's *Be Your Own Stockbroker* (£20.99, Pitman) which takes a classical step-by-step approach to concepts like "price-to-earnings ratios" and explains how to use them. Space is given both to "fundamental value" and bar chart analysis as competing methods of stock selection. Workmanlike in its approach, ranging from the introductory to intermediate.

Finally, a word must be said about tax guides, not least because of the introduction of self assessment. *The Allied Dunbar Tax Handbook* (£26.99, updated annually) is a doddle to them all. Written in sections by chartered accountants, this book could save you from having to pay anyone to fill out your tax return. That has to be worth raising your glasses to this Christmas.

Planning for a healthy retirement

The Client
CAROL is 35 and works for a firm of solicitors with an income of £48,500 pa. She has been with them for two years and expects to stay for the foreseeable future. She owns her own house, worth £160,000 with a mortgage of £110,000.

Last year, an IFA had recommended two personal pension policies amounting to £400 p.m., as her company did not provide a scheme. Carol was feeling very settled in her home and work. Her nagging doubts about her apparent financial security centred on "what if it all went wrong?". She wasn't worried about being made redundant, but she was concerned about anything happening to her health.

The Research
We looked into the two pensions and reviewed the charges and the investment performance record, and estimated whether the contributions would be enough to provide her with an adequate income in retirement. We also checked the terms and rates of her savings account.

Our new recommendations centred around income replacement (known as permanent health insurance - PHI) and critical illness benefit (CIB). Carol was not interested in private medical insurance.

PHI policies provide an income if you are unable to work due to accident or illness. One of the most important decisions is about the "deferred period". This simply means how long you have to be off work before the policy starts to pay. Most PHI policies offer deferred periods of 1, 3, 6 or 12 months, the premiums being more expensive the shorter the period.

We also looked into the definition of disability, as this can vary greatly from one plan to the next. The best policies will pay out if you cannot do your normal job.

Finally, we considered whether to recommend reviewable or guaranteed premiums. Reviewable premium policies are cheaper initially, but may be adjusted by the insurance company every five years. You therefore run the risk of having the premium increased. Guaranteed premiums cannot be changed by the insurance company.

At this point it is down to cost - which company can offer the lowest premium, for the type of cover required.

Critical illness benefit usually provides a cash sum, free of tax, if you contract one of a list of serious illnesses - the most common being cancer, heart attack and stroke. When looking at CIB policies you need to look at which illnesses are covered and how the insurance company defines the illness. This can involve technical medicine, but there is an

THE FIXERS



FIONA PRICE

industry standard definition for the main illnesses covered.

As with PHI policies, you also need to consider whether to have reviewable or guaranteed premiums, and then it is down to cost.

Advice
In our opinion, the pensions the IFA had recommended last year were excellent. The contribution level was good, but would not be quite enough to provide Carol with enough at age 65. We suggested that she put in additional lump sums from time to time, and perhaps to increase the regular payments when she next received a pay rise.

We also warned her that she would need to put even more in if she wanted to retire before 65. Her pension planning was more costly, as she had left it fairly late before starting.

Her building society deposit account was one that provided a consistently good rate so no change needed here.

PHI
Carol's employers would pay her for three months if she couldn't work for health reasons. We could have arranged a contract with a three month deferred period, so that PHI would start exactly when her employer stopped paying her. However, with protection policies, we tend to adopt the approach "only spend as much as you need to get the job done". Carol had money on deposit that she could live on for a few months. We recommended a policy with a six month deferred period.

We arranged for the policy to provide £2,000 p.m., which she needed to cover her out-goings, and this would be tax-free. The policy would run to age 65 when she planned to retire, and would increase each year in line with inflation.

CIB
We considered PHI to be a higher priority than CIB, because Carol's lifestyle depended directly on her income. However we recommended a sum assured of £150,000 which would allow her to pay off her mortgage and still leave a sizeable amount for other purposes.

Fiona Price is managing director of Fiona Price & Partners (0171-430-0366)

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The ones that get away

Thousands of us remember to collect our Lottery winnings each week, but forget to claim free shares worth millions. By Clifford German

MILLIONS OF pounds of Premium Bond prizes go unclaimed every year because the holders have disappeared, died or simply moved house without notifying the National Savings register by the time Ernie got round to remembering them. There are a few big National Lottery winners who have failed to claim their prizes for reasons we can only speculate about.

But much larger sums apparently routinely go unclaimed because insurance policy-holders cannot be traced. This week Colonial Mutual, the Australian-based insurance company, revealed that 60,000 of its 370,000 policy-holders in the UK have failed to claim free shares worth on average £900 to which they are entitled as a result of Colonial converting into a public company last year. "We have been to great lengths to locate our

missing shareholders and are disappointed that such a large number have not been found," Colonial's head of legal services Jacqui Bamford said.

About a third of the missing policy-holders have moved and are untraceable. A mail-out campaign and a call centre are being set up in the new year in

investments where claims are only activated when the policyholder dies or retires. Many holders will have died without leaving the actual policies where they can be found or telling family and friends what policies they have bought.

Coincidentally another insurance company, Cornhill Life,

with life policies have no idea when they mature, more than 10 per cent have not told their insurance companies that they have moved home, nearly 10 per cent have policies which are paid up and are no longer receiving contributions.

Amazingly, it is not necessary for anyone taking out a life policy to nominate a next of kin, although Cornhill is changing its proposal forms to include a request for this information.

It sounds like a good time for all living insurance policy-holders to take elementary precautions, making sure that policies are kept in a safe place; insurance companies are kept up-to-date about changes of address; and, if insurance companies have not asked for next of kin, then at least the intended beneficiaries know what they are entitled to if and when the policyholder is no longer in position to tell anyone.

Twenty per cent of people with life policies have no idea when they mature

an effort to trace the rest. The number of unclaimed windfalls of Britons have woken up to the possibility of windfalls from building societies converting into banks. But insurance policies are much easier to lose track of because, by definition, they are very long-term

has called this week for the establishment by the Association of British Insurers or the Financial Services Authority of a national register of unclaimed policies to help insurance companies trace holders of an estimated £250m worth of unclaimed policies. Research shows that 20 per cent of peo-

Price war at the pharmacy

The Government is going into battle with the drug companies. Expect casualties. By Paul Gosling

Government attempts to reduce the NHS drugs bill have met with an angry reaction from the country's pharmaceutical industry. Tighter controls on drugs pricing could be enough to tilt the balance and lead to an exodus of leading manufacturers overseas, it says.

Profits on drugs sold to the NHS are controlled by the Pharmaceutical Price Regulation Scheme (PPRS), but the Government believes that this gives the industry too easy a ride. Provisions will be introduced in the National Health Service bill in the current parliamentary year to back up the PPRS with reserve powers, enabling the Health Secretary, Frank Dobson, to enforce limits on profits.

"We are quite clear that some [pharmaceutical companies] do not comply [with the PPRS], though most do," said a Department of Health spokeswoman.

The new legislation reinforces a tough line being taken by the Department in negotiations with the industry to renew the PPRS. Discussions began in September and, as the last agreement took 14 months to achieve, it is assumed, at least by the industry, that the revised PPRS will not be in place for some time.

Under the PPRS, the sales, costs and capital transactions of pharmaceutical companies are all monitored to limit the profits made on products sold to the NHS. Where a company begins making excessive profits - more than about a 26 per cent return on capital employed - it is obliged either to reduce prices or repay money to the DoH.

It is clear that health ministers want to bring down the size of the NHS drugs bill as part of their efficiency drive in the NHS. This will be reinforced by the establishment of a National Institute of Clinical Excellence, which will give guidance to doctors on what clinical practices and which drugs are the most effective. But the Government's policy direction is worrying the pharmaceutical industry.

"We don't need more regulation of an industry that has been very successful for the country at a time when things aren't as rosy as they were," says Richard Ley, a spokesman for the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry. "There have been 7,000 jobs lost in the industry over the last five years. We have been a major contributor to Britain's economy - second only to North Sea oil. If the discussions going on now on the PPRS come out badly, many companies would say, why not move somewhere else?"

A report published this month by the ABPI argues that the supportive



Pharmaceutical companies making profits of more than 26 per cent are already obliged to reduce prices or repay the Department of Health *Dillon Bryden*

environment for the drugs industry in the UK is being eroded. It says that the legal infrastructure recognising and defending intellectual assets remains a strong advantage for Britain, but it is being undermined by the lack of relevant skills in the UK workforce. British universities are not producing sufficiently good science graduates, says the industry.

Other governments, such as Ireland, are offering important financial incentives to pharmaceutical companies, which the British Government is not matching, suggests the report. "The UK Pharmaceutical Industry at a Crossroads". The ABPI also fears that the elimination of animal experimentation in the cosmetics industry could lead to restrictions in their use in the drugs industry - which it says would lead to the same tests being carried out overseas, with some of the

companies themselves moving out. The report adds that there needs to be a nurtured culture of "scientific entrepreneurship", which might be clustered in centres of learning. "Britain could create a 'geno-valley' that rivalled Silicon Valley," suggests Dr Trevor Jones, the ABPI's

argues the ABPI, is a refusal to introduce tougher pricing restrictions in domestic sales. "Any minister of health must get value for money," concedes Dr Jones. "In a global industry you could argue it is an isolated activity that has little impact on location. But joined-up govern-

It is also worried about the impact of the National Institute for Clinical Excellence. The ABPI spokesman Richard Ley explains: "The indications are that the emphasis will be on cost not quality. You can spend more up-front and save money in the long-term."

rival quality in the competitiveness stakes - thus making profit and price controls obsolescent," its report concludes. "The pharmaceutical industry in the UK is highly competitive, especially in terms of prices, and should be a benchmark for other countries when it comes to market-driven competition."

Health minister Alan Milburn and the Health Secretary Frank Dobson appear sceptical about these claims, but they are keeping their own counsel, hoping that quiet but tough negotiations will achieve more than loud denunciations. The industry takes the opposite line. By taking a vocal public position, raising fears about job losses, it hopes that the intended tougher price restrictions will be eased.

It will be fascinating to see how the negotiations proceed. The stakes are high, and neither side is going to make concessions easily.

'We are a major contributor to Britain's economy. If the discussions come out badly, companies may say, why not move somewhere else?'

director general. "We could do that here in the Cambridge, Oxford, London triangle. That would require the universities producing a better kind of graduate."

But another key factor in keeping the pharmaceutical companies here,

ment should be involved in joined-up policy-making. A board of directors will respond [to tougher price restrictions], why should we accept that?"

The industry's concern is not just related to changes to the PPRS.

A more effective solution is obvious, says the ABPI. The strength of the drugs market is such that there is no need for continued price, or profit, regulation. "As competition increases in global markets for new medicines, price will increasingly

UPDATE

OWNER-MANAGERS of small businesses could boost their profits by paying their suppliers more quickly, says a survey by Manchester Business School. The study shows that many of these businesses have a reactive approach towards working capital management and planning, which can ultimately lead to cash-flow problems and exposure to volatility in profits. It suggests that, if companies took a more proactive approach, they would be able to take advantage of supplier discounts in order to reduce costs and so increase profits.

THE INSTITUTE of Chartered Accountants is urging the clarification and simplification of the law on directors' interests relating to loans, share dealings and other transactions. In a response to the consultative paper on company directors' interests and duties published by the Law Commission and the Law Commission of Scotland, it also calls for a broad indication of the duties owed by a director to his or her company.

ERNST & YOUNG, the accountancy firm, has launched a virtual business school in partnership with Henley Management College. In addition to offering accredited MBAs to E&Y employees, the Networked Business School will link consultants with Henley academics to work on joint research and publications and enable the use of the latest information technology in management development. The firm also announced this week that its worldwide revenues increased by just under 20 per cent in the year to the end of September 1998, to \$10.9bn (£6.5bn). It has followed other leading accounting firms in strengthening its global management.

REVELATIONS OF an increase in internal fraud in councils around the country, combined with the changes to government policies on local authority management announced in the Queen's Speech, have led the Institute of Internal Auditors to issue new audit guidance to all local authorities. This gives advice to all bodies wishing to implement the most rigorous internal control and risk management processes to meet the new guidelines.

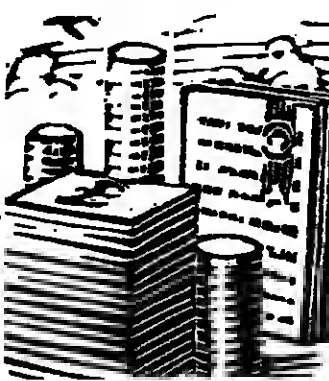
I remember getting a taxi with Jaap...

I KNEW it would turn out to be a horrible mistake. For the past month or so, I've been trying to cut down on my drinking by having one glass of water for every glass of wine I consume. But now I see that what I should have been doing was giving my liver a workout for the festive season. Not that it feels very festive right now. Let me explain.

Yesterday was our team Christmas lunch. Rory had booked the private dining-room in a smart restaurant that I've been meaning to try out, one of those fashionable ones with a one-word name like "Neptune" or "Grocery". Anyway, I was dreading it. Not because of the food, you understand, but because of Jaap.

Ever since I found out it was he who organised my get-well-soon flowers when I had flu the other week, I haven't been able to relax in the office. I get butterflies every time he so much as glances in my direction, and when he stands next to my desk to discuss some deal or other I can hardly breathe. A waft of his aftershave makes me go weak at the knees, and if we meet by the coffee machine I'm so nervous I can't speak. It's absurd. Here I am, 25 years old, and I'm behaving like some silly teenager.

Anyway, there was an escaping the lunch and I was glad I hadn't. Heavenly food, and I managed to relax for the first time in days thanks to



THE TRADER

several spectacular Bloody Marys and a fair measure of champagne. In fact, it all went so well we went on to some drinking place when we'd finished in the restaurant and had a few more refreshments. And suddenly it was 10pm and we'd been drinking for hours and I realised I wanted to go home. The last thing I remember is getting into a taxi and Jaap climbing in after me. After that it's a blank.

I woke up this morning with a vile hangover, one of those ones where you hardly dare open your eyes in case your brain slides out of the sockets. I vowed there and then never to touch another drop of alcohol, as you always do when you have a hangover, and stumbled out of bed to fetch a glass of water and some Resolve. And that's when I saw it, of

course: a man's watch on the bedside table.

I tried desperately to remember anything after getting into the taxi last night with Jaap, but I couldn't. He must have come back here. That was the only possible explanation. We came back here and we... oh God, please, not that! And now I had to go into the office and see him. I sat on the bed, clutching my head, trying to decide which was worse, the hangover or the shame. I could have wept.

I felt every lurch of the Tube as I struggled bravely into the office, my insides like jelly. So it was a relief to find I was the first one in. That would give me a few minutes at least to compose my mind. But I'd hardly sat down when the phone rang, and it was Olivier. Olivier, my boyfriend. All the shame and horror came flooding back. I had got legless and cheated on my boyfriend after an office party. How hideously, hideously tacky.

"Are you all right?" he asked. "You sound terrible."

"I feel terrible," I told him. "I never want another drink again, ever."

He laughed. "You're not the only one. The other morning I was so hungover I lost my watch somewhere. I didn't leave it at your place, did I?"

Olivier's watch. Olivier's watch, not Jaap's. Oh, what a relief.

I'm still going to give up alcohol, though.

Last year's returns can come back to haunt you

If you seem to live outside your means - or just outside the country - the Inland Revenue might well have its eye on you, warns Roger Trapp

WITH THE 31 January 1999 deadline for this year's personal income tax returns looming, it is tempting to think that last year's document has been consigned to history. But that is not the case.

Many taxpayers could find their Christmas post soured by an inquiry from the Inland Revenue. This is because part of the philosophy of self-assessment is that the Revenue can inquire into anybody's tax return for any reason at all. As long as the taxpayer returns the document by 31 January, the authorities only have the next 12 months in which to launch a standard investigation, though it would still be possible to start an inquiry into suspected fraud or incomplete disclosure after that period. However, if a taxpayer is late getting the form back, the Revenue has until the end of the quarter following the first anniversary after the submission of the return to begin an investigation.

Though accountants have seen some inquiries into last year's returns in the past year, there have not been as many as they would have expected. The firms reckon that this is because district tax offices have been so overwhelmed by the introduction of self-assessment that they are significantly behind schedule.

In the old days, this would probably have just led to the deadline passing harmlessly. But in this era

of performance targets, it is thought that many offices will be tempted to - in the words of David Williams, tax partner with Smith & Williamson - "keep the door open by launching some sort of investigation".

"I've a feeling there may be quite a lot of inquiries started over the next few weeks," he added. In some cases, the inquiry will be "quite innocuous", but in others - such as where the taxpayer is self-employed - it can look more serious.

Though there is a code of practice - in line with the soft image of self-assessment the Revenue has sought to portray with the aid of the mascot "Hector" - the letters can look alarming, says Mr Williams. And anybody in this situation can find that they are dealing with "Hector's" rather less friendly brother," he suggests.

Nevertheless, the over-riding message is not to panic. "So long as you co-operate sensibly and truthfully in a reasonable time, the worst thing that will happen should be writing a cheque," says Mr Williams.

At the same time, though, he warns taxpayers to take such investigations seriously. While its larger rival PricewaterhouseCoopers is challenging clients to find the funny side to Revenue investigations by playing a game called "Trouble with the taxman", Smith & Williamson reminds them that these investigations do not go away. Not



Hector, the friendly face of the Inland Revenue

surprisingly, it suggests that taxpayers - even if they have filled in the return themselves or used one of the standard tax return services - seek the help of a firm experienced in investigations. Accountants from such a practice will then be able to assess the seriousness of the situation and advise accordingly.

PwC's John Nisbet explains that, although its game is meant as "a

new and thought-provoking way of looking at this subject", the message is that even in-depth investigations of this sort can be survived with the "business and family intact".

Since the Revenue has committed itself to making routine checks on returns, some of these cases can be dealt with quickly, but others will warrant more attention.

In particular, taxpayers need to bear in mind that the Revenue has a system for scoring returns in relation to risk. Accordingly, returns from people who have offshore holdings or are not UK-domiciled for instance, are more likely to attract interest. Similarly, the Revenue is often suspicious of businesses where there is a high cash element and where lifestyles do not match information on returns.

The Revenue also looks at turnover trends, and - according to accountants - has a tendency to assume that they always go up. Accordingly, Mr Williams is prepared to see farmers - who have seen earnings plummet in recent years - attracting interest.

What people have to remember, he says, is that the Revenue is much more financially-driven than it was when income tax was introduced 200 years ago. Last year, compliance activity by officials may have raised as much as £2bn - equivalent to more than 1p on the basic rate of income tax.

The £6million chef

I WORK FOR ...

SARB BASRAN WORKS FOR ROGER ROBAR, NATIONAL LOTTERY WINNER AND RESTAURATEUR

My first point of contact with Roger was through his food. I was working in the US in marketing and management but whenever I came back to London I would visit my friends in Crouch End, and we would go for a meal at the Booby Rouge restaurant where Roger was chef. The restaurant was like one of those seedy downtown San Diego bars - plastic tablecloths and rocky chairs, but the cooking was cordon bleu standard and very much cooked with love. And Roger was so hospitable that experiencing a meal here was like finding a lily growing in a dirty pond.

One morning I noticed a newspaper cutting in the window of the restaurant reading "Chef wins six million pounds in the Lottery", and the next thing I knew Roger had bought the place from his boss and turned it into a smart seafood restaurant called Roger's. He re-employed all his old staff at double their original salary and then he approached me. Initially, I thought he would only need me for a few months to help with setting up the restaurant, but I ended up staying in as his general PA.

My job is so varied that it includes everything from accompanying Roger to the fish or vegetable market at dawn, doing the accounts, arranging transport or a visit from the electrician, to telling people about a new fragrance that has just arrived in Roger's perfume shop. I also try to ensure that Roger has the chance to get the most out of London, which he loves, so I book him into plays and shows whenever possible.

I work hard from nine until the restaurant closes. Moody through to Saturday, but I am determined that Roger should have an organised business. Roger is a very hands-on boss and prefers to show you how to do something himself rather than give instructions, and I need to be in a top condition in order to keep up with him. He gets up at four in the morning after working a night



Sarb and Roger in his Crouch End restaurant: 'He wants to give something back to the local community'

Philip Meech

shift at the restaurant, which is very demanding, yet he remains on the go seven days a week.

The reason Roger still works so hard has something to do with his personal relationship with Crouch End. At 23, he was the youngest chef to become a master chef and he has cooked all over the world, including for French and American presidents, but the people who really gave him love and appreciation were in his local community. He wants to give something back to them, which is one of the reasons he is setting up a catering college.

At times I am protective of him, because people tend to crowd around him believing his luck to be infectious. I also deal with all the letters he receives which ask him for money. Initially he gave a lot of help to those he felt most needed it, including struggling single mothers, but people were ungrateful and just wanted more and more from him.

For someone like Roger to win so much money and to remain in his local community, he needs a lot of strength, because the phenomenal jealousy that some friends obviously feel can cause them to be

really horrible to him. But it just makes him try harder than ever to give something back to the young and the elderly. He always takes the time to carry out the things he says he's going to do - maybe one day he will become an MP.

He still does the Lottery twice a week, using his special system, and I am sure he will win again. He encourages me to join in but I don't think I would want to be a multi-millionaire, having seen the amount of stress it can cause. Besides, I've had a thoroughly enjoyable life. I've worked in the US in really well-paid

jobs, travelling in limos, flying around the world, going to openings at clubs and restaurants. But working for Roger is the icing on the cake. I can't believe I am being paid to do a job that I so thoroughly enjoy working for a spiritual boss who cares about the details of life. Through him I've discovered that the purpose in life is to give back as much as you take, something people often forget. If only people understood that, rather than thinking, "Oh yes, attractive woman works for rich boss".

INTERVIEW BY
KATIE SAMPSON

Chatline cheek



THE TEMP

"HELLO?" "HELLO?" "Hello?"
"Hello," I say. "Who's that?"
"Kevin."

"Hi, Kevin. How are you?"
"I'm all right. Who's that?"
"I'm Mandy," I say, because

tonight I'm Mandy. Tomorrow I'll be Debbie. Yesterday I was Teresa. I thought I'd already

scaled the heights of anonymity, but if you're womanizing a

chatline, you get a new identity every night. Still, I earn half as much again in five hours as I

was earning in the pub, and I get to hone my acting skills.

"Hello, Mandy," says Kevin, and his voice has dropped half an octave. "How are you tonight?"

"I'm very well," I say, swigging on my bottle of water, then giggle. "A bit tipsy."

"Oh yeah? Me too. What have you been up to?"

"Ooh, you know. Went out for a couple with the girls from work."

"That's nice," says Kevin. "What do you do, Mandy?"

"I'm a secretary," - well, at least that's not a lie - "in a big advertising firm."

Well, this lot do advertise. Pretty much every day in *The Sun* and *The Sport*, alongside the "Naughty Schoolgirls Lose Their Clothes" lines and just below the stairlift ad. My job is

to keep the drunken, lonely or underage lads who call up in search of a thrill on the line for as long as possible; if I can spin the call out to longer than 20 minutes I get a 10 per cent bonus.

"Ooh," says Kevin, "a secretary." We're all secretaries, or beauticians, or work in fashion stores here.

These are the ideal jobs; not so high-powered we scare them away, classy enough to feed their fantasies. Of course, what they're all hoping to get is a

model, but you only get models on the XXX-rated double-premium lines. And then - if Lauren, who staffs the phone-sex booth next to mine, is anything to go by - they weigh

18 stone and haven't washed their hair in three weeks.

"Is that a good job, then?"

"OK," I notice my nails are looking a bit ragged, dig in my bag for a file. "Bit boring. We

get famous people in sometimes, though."

"Famous?" Kevin squeals a little, then returns to his manly tenor. "Like who?"

"Ooh," I say. "We had that Linda Robson out of *Birds of a Feather* in the other day. And Vic Reeves. He's always doing voiceovers."

"Vic Reeves?" splutters Kevin. "You know Vic Reeves? What's he like?" "Quite ordinary, really. So, Kevin, what do you do?"

"I'm - a pause while he thinks something up - a racing driver." "A racing driver? Blimey! What's it like?"

"Pure dead brilliant. I did 300 miles an hour yesterday," says Kevin. "It's not all glamour. But it's what I'm good at."

"Ooh," I say, "have you ever had a crash?" "Hundreds," says Kevin, getting a bit breathy. "I drive experimental cars, you see. I almost died once."

"Well, I'm glad you didn't. Wasn't it horribly painful?" Kevin sounds sanguine. "You get used to pain in this game. What do you look like, Mandy?"

"Well, I've got long blonde hair and long legs. I'm quite pretty, I suppose. A bit like Denise Van Outen." A long exhalation. "And what are you wearing?"

His voice pitch slides upwards again. "I'm wearing a silk blouse," trackies, trainers and a jumper, "though it's come a bit undone while we were in the pub. And a short skirt and stockings." Another pause. "And what colour are your knickers?"

"Kevin," - that's it, fish caught. "I'll be getting my bonus tonight - you're not supposed to ask me questions like that."

"Are they red? Have they got lace on?" Suddenly there's a squeak. "Oh no! It's my mum!"

The line goes dead. Damn. I dial back into the switchboard and listen as a host of voices goes "Hello? Hello? Hello?"

Once line one's been holding for 45 seconds, I pick him up.

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EXPERIENCED TYPIST/EDITOR/PA

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Covent Garden based Top Ten PR agency

need up to six months MATERNITY COVER on reception.

Extremely busy reception and switchboard, therefore 2yrs minimum relevant experience essential. Salary approx 15k pro rata. Start January. Interviewing now. Please send CV and photo to: Caron Jenner, 69 Monmouth Street, London W2H 9DG. No Agencies

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to take responsibility for market making equity trade business in the areas of oil, utilities, transport and mining. The successful candidate will possess a minimum degree level coupled with 4/5 years directly relevant experience within an investment banking environment. The salary offered is commensurate with experience. If you possess the skills required for this position please send your CV to P.O. Box 21015A, Islington, London N12 2XQ.

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We are looking for a professional, motivated individual with at least 2 years post qualifying experience, experience of French financial reporting regulations and of the French

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Brendan Collins, Senior Staff Manager
Mazars Neville Russell 24 Bevis Marks, London EC2A 3NR

Or call him on 0171 220 3481 for more information.

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DIOCESE OF SOUTHWARK

wishes to appoint

A SECRETARY

for the Kingston Episcopal Area Office SW15 (Salary scale £12,171 to £14,347 Inc) who will be a member of the team providing secretarial and administrative services to the Kingston Episcopal Area Office and in particular to the Archdeacon of Lambeth and Wandsworth.

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The Diocese of Southwark is working towards Equal Opportunities

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We are a leading UK Handbag and Luggage Distributor looking to expand in 1999 and need to find intelligent, enthusiastic recruits to work within our sales and purchasing departments. Successful applicants will gain experience in key areas of our commercial operations and contribute towards our renewed growth. You will be numerate, articulate, computer literate, and enjoy working as part of a busy team. We welcome applications from recent graduates or candidates with strong administrative experience. Salary negotiable.

CV to: Justin Murphy, The Tula Group Plc, 94 Villiers Road, London NW2 5TW

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Leading London Media agency requires experienced PA for two deputy MD's. Organisational skills, calm and composed manner with ability to work to impossible deadlines essential.

This position would suit a 24+ year old candidate with an outgoing personality and ability to have fun even under stressful conditions!

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A number of leading high street Fashion Companies are looking for recent, bright, ambitious grads seeking a career in Buying or Merchandising. You must have some fashion retail work experience, be computer literate, highly numerate and a good team player. Great career opportunities for commercially aware graduates.

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NEW FILMS

THE BOYS (18)

Director: Rowan Woods
Starring: David Wenham, Toni Collette, Lynette Curran
Out of jail after serving a sentence for GBH, oldest boy Brett Sprague (David Wenham) moves back into his mum's drab suburban home, terrorises his girlfriend (Toni Collette), and turns his younger brothers into petty henchmen.
Adapted from Gordon Graham's acclaimed stage-play, *The Boys* spotlights the flipside of life Down Under, with a stark social-realist drama circling gracefully around a horrific crime which is hinted at but never actually shown.
Occasionally, the film's theatrical origins are too readily apparent, but Rowan Woods' stealthy handling and Wenham's menacing lead ensure that the interest seldom dwindles. Potent, predatory stuff.
West End: Metro, Ritzy Cinema

THE MASK OF ZORRO (PG)

Director: Martin Campbell
Starring: Antonio Banderas, Anthony Hopkins, Catherine Zeta Jones
The Zorro yarn resurrected. Martin "GoldenEye" Campbell's gaudy swashbuckler gallops full-speed through 19th-century California in the company of Antonio Banderas's authentically Hispanic do-gooder. A bite-sized history lesson on West Coast politics jostles for purchase amid a riot of colourful duels and clattering action setpieces. It's old-fashioned and reliably entertaining. Anthony Hopkins and Catherine Zeta Jones bring a whiff of the valleys to their father-and-pushed fighting their way out of a paper bag. Duchovny and luminous co-star Angelina Jolie look on stupefied.
West End: Virgin Fulham Road, Warner Village West End

THE PARENT TRAP (PG)

Director: Nancy Meckler
Starring: Lindsay Lohan, Malasha Richardson
The Parent Trap catches Disney cannibalising its own back catalogue: re-beating its 1961 Hayley Mills heartwarmer into a spry, cross-cultural caper starring Lindsay Lohan as the separated-at-birth twin sisters (one British, one American) determined to get their parents (Natalia Richardson and Dennis Quaid) back together. It's a film of sleek, clean surfaces, bright colours and neat knockabout comedy. But a thick layer of syrup covers every inch.
West End: Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Odeon West End, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Chelsea

PLAYING GOD (18)

Director: Andy Wilson
Starring: David Duchovny, Timothy Hutton
Cracker director Wilson suffers a rude lesson in Hollywood politics with this glossy but garbled thriller about a junkie doctor (David Duchovny) embroiled with a gang of counterfeiters headed by a bannan Tim Hutton.
Essentially a star vehicle for Duchovny, *Playing God* nonetheless conspires to steer a most ill-disciplined course, swerving from grisly violence (cue jets of arterial blood) to a po-faced character study (Duchovny wants his licence back to surrealistic comedy (an encounter with a bunch of saintly bikers). Hutton and his cronies indulge in all manner of insipid gangster chat, but they look like a limp and spindly bunch who would be hard pushed fighting their way out of a paper bag. Duchovny and luminous co-star Angelina Jolie look on stupefied.
West End: Virgin Fulham Road, Warner Village West End

Nathaniel Hulley

GENERAL RELEASE

ANTZ (PG)

See *The Independent Recommends*, above.
West End: ABC Tottenham Court Road, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Plaza, Ritzy Cinema, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Chelsea, Virgin Trocadero

BABE: PIG IN THE CITY (U)

Follow-up to Babe tosses the hapless "sheep-pig" into the midst of the city where he becomes the unlikely saviour of a bunch of assorted wails. Knockabout comedy is kept to a minimum in favour of a bleak, animatronic fairytale.
West End: ABC Baker Street, ABC Tottenham Court Road, Barbican Screen, Clapham Picture House, Elephant & Castle Coronet, Empire Leicester Square, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Trocadero

BLADE (18)

Wesley Snipes soundtrack bumps and grinds behind this monotonous thriller about a New York vampire killer tackling a power-crazed new bloodsucker. Noise and martial-arts action mask its tiny pedigree.
West End: Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Ritzy Cinema, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Trocadero, Warner Village West End

DANCING AT LUGHNASSA (PG)

Less a dance, more of a trudge, O'Connor's Ireland-set saga pinpoints the ebb and flow of an Catholic family in deepest Donegal. What gives it backbone is Meryl Streep's regal performance as the brood's eldest sister, plus the ever-watchable Michael Gambon as the homecoming brother. Kathy Burke, Catherine McCormack and Brid Brennan also feature.
West End: Curzon Mayfair, Notting Hill Coronet, Screen on the Hill

DEAD MAN'S CURVE (15)

All the students at writer-director Dan Rosen's nameless American college are trying to butcher each other, led into temptation by an obscure regulation that awards straight-A grades to the room-mates of suicides. *Dead Man's Curve* delivers a respectable quota of drive-in shocks.
West End: ABC Piccadilly, Virgin Trocadero

ELIZABETH (15)

Shekhar Kapur's follow-up to *Bandit Queen* is the story of a woman struggling to find purchase in a male world. But Kapur largely neglects the opportunities for fun in a film which ultimately tells a tale of independence triumphing over cruelty.
West End: ABC Tottenham Court Road, Odeon Haymarket, Odeon Mezzanine, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Screen on the Green, Virgin Fulham Road

THE END OF VIOLENCE (15)

Win Wenders is back on form with this stylish and intelligent techno-noir about a Nasa plot to "end violence as we know it" through mass surveillance.
West End: Ritzy Cinema

FEAR AND LOATHING IN LAS VEGAS (18)

Terry Gilliam's adaptation fills at Ralph Steadman cartoonery for its tale of a drug-fueled journalistic assignment. The film soon descends into a carnival of narcotic lunacy, and the one stand-out is Johnny Depp, who brings Hunter S Thompson into bald-headed, pigeon-toed life.
West End: ABC Baker Street, Empire Leicester Square, Odeon Camden Town, Ritzy Cinema, Screen on the Green, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Trocadero

THE FOUNTAINHEAD (PG)

See *The Independent Recommends*, above.
West End: Curzon Soho

IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE (U)

Capra's festive bauble is a lot darker and more complex than it is generally given credit for being, with James Stewart's labouring everyman shown how dreary his hometown would have been had he never been born. Its syrupy sentimentality contains a thick vein of bile, and, at the day's end, this is the making of the film; turning it into a bittersweet salute to the little man who makes a big difference.
West End: Clapham Picture House, Curzon Soho, Gate Notting Hill, Phoenix Cinema, Ritzy Cinema

LEFT LUGGAGE (PG)

Krabbe's first stab as a director focuses on the ebbs and flows within a Basidic family in 1970s Holland. Fitful as drama, the film comes to life as a showcase for its high-profile performers plus rising star Laura Fraser.
West End: ABC Swiss Centre, Curzon Minima, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Phoenix Cinema, Rio Cinema, Screen on Baker Street

LOCK, STOCK AND TWO SMOKING BARRELS (18)

Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels follows the lead of Quentin Tarantino, but the film's defining characteristic is its resilient morality. The picture is peppered by thugs, both amateur and professional. Young Eddy, who comes unstuck in a high-stakes card game, falls into the former category; but Hatchet, Harry, to whom he owes £300,000, is a dangerous old-school pro.
West End: ABC Baker Street, ABC Pantons Street, Clapham Picture House, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Mezzanine, Rio Cinema, Warner Village West End

MULAN (U)

This Disney's animated feature has it all: a pro-active heroine who doesn't want to tend to a man or pet woodland animals; a strong father/daughter relationship; honour and nobility; and, of course, cross-dressing. It's also one of the most visually innovative movies that Disney has ever made.
West End: Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Ritzy Cinema, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Trocadero, Warner Village West End

MY NAME IS JOE (15)

See *The Independent Recommends*, above.
West End: ABC Tottenham Court Road, Ritzy Cinema, Screen on the Hill, Virgin Chelsea, Virgin Haymarket

THE NEGOTIATOR (13)

Samuel L. Jackson and Kevin Spacey go head to head in this thrilling drama. The script has a predilection for lunk-headed swearing that sounds uneasy in the mouths of such articulate performers.
West End: ABC Tottenham Court Road, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Marble Arch, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Trocadero, Warner Village West End

ON CONNAIT LA CHANSON (PG)

Love him or loathe him, *Last Year at Marienbad* auteur Resnais is a queer fish. Four years after the Continental breakfast be made of Alan Ayckbourn's *Smoking/No Smoking* comes this rattling merry-go-round of romantic intrigue, "inspired by the work of Dennis Potter", and featuring a lot of Pottersque lip-synching to popular French song tunes.
West End: Chelsea Cinema, Renoir

OUT OF SIGHT (15)

See *The Independent Recommends*, above.
West End: Clapham Picture House, Empire Leicester Square, Gate Notting Hill, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Ritzy Cinema, Screen on Baker Street, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Chelsea, Virgin Trocadero

RONIN (15)

See *The Independent Recommends*, above.
West End: Odeon Kensington, Odeon West End, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Fulham Road

RUSH HOUR (15)

Rush Hour marries the Hong Kong action icon Jackie Chan with an LA backdrop, a jobbing Hollywood director (*Money Talks*'s Reiner) and a wise-cracking black comic in Chris Tucker's huckstering LAPD man. Its caffeinated plotline sends Easterner and Westerner on the trail of a Chinese crime syndicate, and oscillates wildly between Tucker's verbal dexterity and Chan's adrenalinised physicality. It's a hit-and-miss affair.
West End: Elephant & Castle Coronet, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Plaza, Ritzy Cinema, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Chelsea, Virgin Trocadero, Warner Village West End

THE INDEPENDENT RECOMMENDS

THE FIVE BEST FILMS

Out of Sight (15)

This tale of love on opposite sides of the law from director Steven Soderbergh manages to knock spots off every previous Elmore Leonard adaptation, and boasts in George Clooney and Jennifer Lopez, the most romantic pairing of the cinematic year.

Antz (PG)

Computer-animated comedy voiced by a stellar cast stars Woody Allen as a worker ant who becomes an unlikely opponent of the colony's totalitarian regime. Allee's best work in a while.

Ronin (15)

John Frankenheimer's action thriller (right) is buttressed by a fine international cast (Robert De Niro, Jean Reno, Stellan Skarsgard), moody French locations and a clutch of super-charged car chases.

My Name is Joe (15)

All that one would expect from a film by Ken Loach - emotional sympathy, indignation and humour - all driven by Peter Mullan's sear, intense performance as a recovering alcoholic in a bleak vision of Glasgow.

The Fountainhead (PG: Curzon Soho)

Gary Cooper plays a visionary architect who refuses to huckle under mob pressure in King Vidor's astonishing adaptation of the Ayn Rand novel. Patricia Neal smoulders opposite him.

ANTHONY QUINN

THE FIVE BEST PLAYS

The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe

Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford
Anthony Ward's splendid sets and Aslan are the stars of the Royal Shakespeare Company's Christmas spectacular (right). To 27 Feb

Martin Guerre

Playhouse, Leeds
The gifted young Irish director Connal Morrison stages a second reworking of the troubled Bouffal/Schoenberg musical. Will it be third time lucky? To 13 Feb

Love Upon the Throne

Comedy Theatre
The Charles and Diana story (well, up to the divorce) presented by the National Theatre of Brent. Hilarious and oddly touching. To 31 Jan

Angela Carter Cinderella

Lyric, Hammersmith
This feast of inspired silliness and visual magic by Angela Carter has lashings of drag and double entendres, plus the best mix on a West End stage. To 9 Jan

The Boy Who Fell Into a Book

Stephen Joseph Theatre, Scarborough
Typically witty and ingenious concept from Alan Ayckbourn - here wearing his children's dramatist hat. To 9 Jan

PAUL TAYLOR

THE FIVE BEST SHOWS

Aubrey Beardsley

Victoria & Albert Museum
Displaying the short, glittering life of the aesthete and illustrator, with his sinuous and florid line. Drawings, prints and posters. To 10 Jan

Louise Bourgeois

Serpentine Gallery
Veteran French-American sculptress, still a leading light at 87, shows new installations in which a giant mother/spider presides over images of spinning and weaving, restoration and decay. To 10 Jan

Goya: The Disparates

Maidstone

Museum & Art

Gallery

Goya was deaf, ill and in his seventies when he produced his last series of etchings (right). Mysterious in intention, it is a void world: life is folly, men fly off on wings into darkness. To 23 Jan

Chris Offill

Whitworth Gallery, Manchester

Mancheater

This 1908 Turner Prize-winner is an upbeat original, his surfaces dense and decorative, with swirls of dots, eyes, Afros and black icons, as well as incorporating mutant balls of elephant dung. To 24 Jan

Edward Burne-Jones

Birmingham

Museum & Art

Gallery

Ceotenary exhibition gathers together many favourites illustrating Burne-Jones's romantic and medievalist nether world. To 17 Jan

TOM LUBBOCK

CINEMA

WEST END

ABC BAKER STREET
(0171-369 1733) Hyde Park
Left Luggage 2.50pm, 5.50pm, 8.40pm
La Vie Revee Des Anges 4.40pm, 8.40pm

ABC PANTONS STREET
(0171-282 4322) (from 1pm)
Piccadilly Circus The Last Days of Disco 1.10pm, 3.40pm, 6.10pm, 8.25pm
Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels 1.10pm, 3.35pm, 6pm, 8.30pm, 10.50pm, 12.20pm
The Mask of Zorro 1.10pm, 3.35pm, 6pm, 8.30pm, 10.50pm, 12.20pm

ABC SWISS CENTRE
(0171-9020402) Leicester Square/Piccadilly Circus
Angel 1.30pm, 3.25pm, 5.20pm, 7.15pm, 9.10pm
The Negotiator 1.45pm, 4.05pm, 6.25pm, 8.45pm
Rien Ne Va Plus 4.45pm, 9.05pm
La Vie Revee Des Anges 1.25pm, 3.45pm, 6.05pm, 8.25pm

ABC TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD
(0171-9020414) Tottenham Court Road
Antz 1.25pm, 6.35pm
Babe: Pig in the City 4pm, 6.20pm, 8.40pm
Elizabeth 8.55pm
My Name Is Joe 1.15pm, 3.35pm, 6.40pm, 9.20pm
The Negotiator 8.50pm

BARBICAN SCREEN
(0171-638 8891) Barbican
Babe: Pig in the City 1.30pm, 6pm, 8.15pm
The Mask of Zorro 6pm, 8.40pm

CLAPHAM PICTURE HOUSE
(0171-498 3323) Clapham
Clapham Picture House 1.45pm, 4.15pm, 6.45pm
It's A Wonderful Life 1.30pm, 6.30pm
Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels 4pm, 6.15pm
The Mask of Zorro 12.45pm, 3.30pm, 6.15pm, 9pm
Out of Sight 9.30pm

CURZON MAYFAIR
(0171-369 1733) Green Park
Dancing At Lughnassa 2pm, 4.15pm, 6.30pm, 9pm

CURZON SOHO
(0171-734 2255) (12pm-6pm)
Leicester Square/Tottenham Court Road
The End of Violence 1.30pm, 4.15pm
The Fountainhead 2.45pm, 9.30pm
Henry Fool 3.20pm, 9pm
It's A Wonderful Life 12.45pm, 6.30pm
The Philadelphia Story 12.30pm, 5pm, 7.15pm

ELPHANT & CASTLE CORONET
(0171-703 4968) Elephant & Castle
Babe: Pig in the City 4pm, 6.20pm, 8.30pm
The Mask of Zorro 4.10pm, 6.30pm, 8.45pm

EMPIRE LEICESTER SQUARE
(0990-888990) Leicester Square
Babe: Pig in the City 1.15pm, 3.45pm, 6.15pm, 8.45pm
Fear And Loathing In Las Vegas 12.40pm, 3.30pm, 6.10pm, 9pm
Out of Sight 12.10pm, 2.55pm, 5.50pm, 8.35pm

NOTTING HILL CORONET
(0171-727 6705) Notting Hill
Gate Dancin' At Lughnassa 2.30pm, 4.30pm, 6.30pm, 8.45pm

ODEON CAMDEN TOWN
(08705 050007) Camden Town
Babe: Pig in the City 12.10pm, 2.10pm, 4.15pm, 6.15pm
The Mask of Zorro 11.50am, 2.40pm, 5.40pm, 8.30pm
The Negotiator 8.20pm
Out of Sight 12.00pm, 3pm, 5.55pm, 8.40pm
The Parent Trap 12.15pm, 2.50pm, 5.30pm, 8.10pm
Rush Hour 11.55am, 2.15pm, 4.30pm, 6.40pm, 9.05pm

ODEON KENSINGTON
(08705 050007) High Street
Kensington
Babe: Pig in the City 12.00pm, 2.25pm, 4.50pm, 7.15pm
Blade 9.35pm
The Mask of Zorro 12.30pm, 2.30pm, 4.30pm, 6.30pm, 8.30pm, 10.30pm

ODEON LEICESTER SQUARE
(08705 050007) Leicester Square
The Mask of Zorro 11.40pm, 2.30pm, 5.25pm, 8.20pm

ODEON MARBLE ARCH
(08705 050007) Marble Arch
Babe: Pig in the City 11.55am, 2.10pm, 4.45pm, 6.35pm
The Mask of Zorro 11.45pm, 2.50pm, 5.55pm, 8.50pm
The Negotiator 8.55pm
Out of Sight 12.20pm, 3.15pm, 6.05pm, 8.55pm
The Parent Trap 12.15pm, 3.05pm, 5.55pm, 8.50pm
Rush Hour 11.50am, 2.15pm, 4.40pm, 7.05pm, 9.30pm

ODEON MEZZANINE
(08705 050007) Leicester Square
Elizabeth 12.35pm, 3.05pm, 5.35pm, 8.20pm
Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels 1.25pm, 3.55pm, 6.20pm, 8.55pm
Rien Ne Va Plus 4.45pm, 8.15pm
Snake Eyes 2pm, 4.10pm, 6.20pm, 8.35pm
There's Something About Mary 12.30pm, 3.15pm, 5.45pm, 8.20pm

ODEON SWISS COTTAGE
(08705 050007) Swiss Cottage
Antz 1.50pm, 3.50pm, 6pm
Babe: Pig in the City 12.10pm, 2.15pm, 4.20pm, 6.30pm
Elizabeth 1.30pm, 6.30pm
Left Luggage 8.45pm
The Mask of Zorro 1.40pm, 4.55pm, 8pm
Out of Sight 12.20pm, 3pm, 5.55pm, 8.20pm
The Parent Trap 12.15pm, 3.05pm, 5.45pm, 8.25pm
Rush Hour 1.30pm, 4pm, 6.30pm, 8.50pm

ODEON WEST END
(08705 050007) Leicester Square
The Parent Trap 12.15pm, 3pm, 5.40pm, 8.30pm
Ronin 12.35pm, 2.15pm, 4.45pm, 8.25pm

PEPSI MAX CINEMA
(494 4153) Piccadilly Circus
Everest 12.35pm, 2.40pm, 7.15pm, 9.05pm
Back To The Future (3-D) 11.30am, 1.35pm, 3.40pm, 5.45pm, 8pm, 10.05pm

PHOENIX CINEMA
(011-444 6789) East Finchley
It's A Wonderful Life 4pm
Left Luggage 1.45pm, 6.45pm, 9pm

PLAZA
(0990-888990) Piccadilly Circus
Antz 1.15pm, 3.30pm
Rush Hour 1.30pm, 4pm, 6.30pm, 9pm
Saving Private Ryan 3.15pm, 7.15pm
The Truman Show 6pm, 8.30pm
Twilight 1pm, 3.45pm, 6.15pm, 8.35pm

SCREEN ON BAKER STREET
(0171-935 2772) Baker Street
Left Luggage 2.30pm, 4.40pm, 6.50pm, 9pm
Out of Sight 3.40pm, 6.10pm, 8.40pm

SCREEN ON THE GREEN
(0171-226 3520) Angel
Elizabeth 3.35pm
Love Is The Devil 6.40pm
La Vie Revee Des Anges 8.40pm

SCREEN ON THE HILL
(0171-435 3366) Belsize Park
Dancing At Lughnassa 2.45pm, 4.45pm, 6.45pm
My Name Is Joe 8.50pm

UCI WHITELEYS
(0990-888990) Queensway
Antz 2.50pm, 5.20pm, 7.20pm, 9.40pm
Babe: Pig in the City 3.50pm, 6.40pm, 9.20pm
The Mask of Zorro 3.05pm, 5.55pm, 8.50pm
The Negotiator 3.10pm, 6pm, 9pm
Out of Sight 3.30pm, 6.40pm, 9.15pm
The Parent Trap 3.20pm, 6.10pm, 9.05pm
Ronin 4.20pm, 6.50pm, 9.40pm
Snake Eyes 9.30pm

UCI WHITELEYS
(0870-9070710) South Kensington
Antz 12.30pm, 2.30pm, 4.30pm, 6.30pm
My Name Is Joe 8.50pm
There's Something About Mary 12.30pm, 3.30pm, 6.20pm, 9.15pm
Playing Out 3.30pm, 4.10pm, 7.10pm, 9.30pm
The Truman Show 1.15pm, 3.20pm, 6pm, 8.50pm

UCI WHITELEYS
(0870-9070716) Piccadilly Circus
Antz 12.10pm, 2.20pm, 4.40pm, 6.40pm, 8.50pm
Babe: Pig in the City 1pm, 3.20pm, 5.40pm, 8.10pm
Blade 12.10pm, 2.10pm, 4.20pm, 6.20pm, 8.20pm, 10.20pm

WARNER VILLAGE WEST END
(0171-467 4243) Leicester Square
Blade 1.20pm, 4pm, 6.40pm, 9.20pm
The Exorcist (25th Anniversary Rerelease) 12.30pm, 3.20pm, 6pm, 8.40pm
Lethal Weapon 12.00pm, 2.50pm, 5.40pm, 8.30pm
Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels 1.20pm, 3.40pm, 6.20pm, 8.50pm
The Negotiator 12.10pm, 3.10pm, 6.10pm, 9.10pm

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Lethal Weapon 12.00pm, 2.50pm, 5.40pm, 8.30pm
Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels 1.20pm, 3.40pm, 6.20pm, 8.50pm
The Negotiator 12.10pm, 3.10pm, 6.10pm, 9.10pm

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